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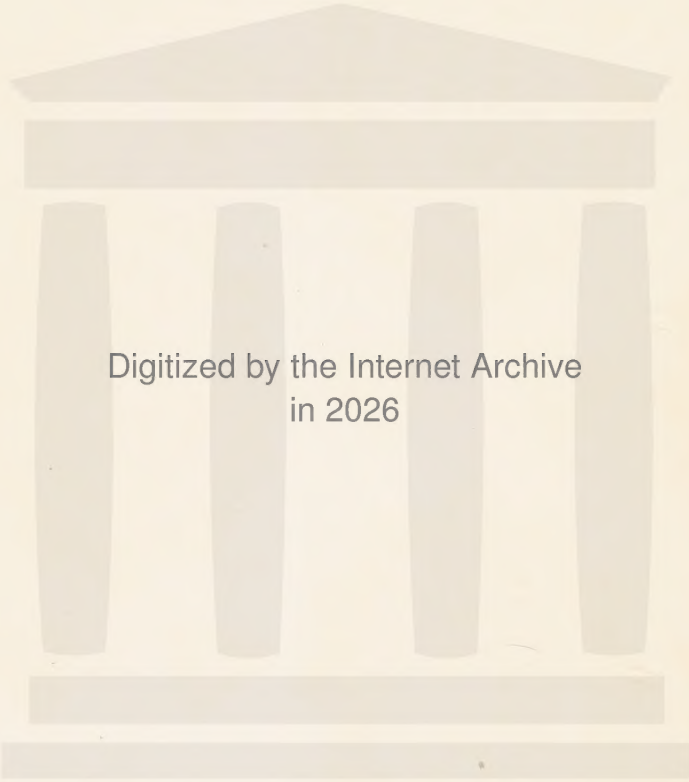
The aristocratic
west

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THE
ARISTOCRATIC WEST

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The Aristocratic West

By

Katharine Fullerton Gerould

Author of "Lost Valley"



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Harper & Brothers, Publishers

New York and London

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THE
ARISTOCRATIC WEST

Chapter One

THE ARISTOCRATIC WEST

WE are all, in the East, familiar with the friend and fellow-citizen who has remained steadily east of Pittsburgh, and who refers to everything beyond the Alleghenies as "the West." I recall a friend of my husband's who urged him to attend some meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, on the score that "it was time they knew what the Far West was like." He would not make that mistake now, for he has experienced the West. I know a great many Americans, however, familiar from childhood with Europe, who still murmur: "Oh yes, I suppose one ought to see the West—some of the scenery must be very fine. But after all, you can get scenery in Europe—and then there is so much else. In the West there is no historic, no human interest. And it is such a long way to go. . . . And the *people!*" They spend a week or ten days crossing the Atlantic, with no protestations; but they grudge four days to get to the Pacific coast. They enjoy converse with the Euro-

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pean peasant, but they are a little shy of enforced conversation with the Western American.

There is no arguing with such folk: the only cure is for them to cross the continent. Sooner or later for some reason they do, and their accent is changed for all time. The West is, on its side, quite as capable of provincialism as the East, though on the whole Westerners know us better than we know them. Last summer we conversed in Arizona with a weather-wise brakeman who had much to say concerning the chances of rain and the difference of seasons in the desert. "I see they've had a terrible lot of rain in the East—floods, bad ones," he remarked, pityingly. Having left drought at home, we were interested—until we discovered that by "East" *he* meant Colorado. The friend who on the eve of sailing for Spain asked us in vaguely satirical fashion, "Where *is* Montana?" was no more sectionally minded than the brakeman.

These, if you like, are extreme cases of geographical snobbishness. Yet I believe that most Easterners who have not experienced the West are victims of a certain rather prejudiced and muddled state of mind. They have a vague notion that "the West" means cowboys and wild political vagaries, and they tend to confuse the habit of the six-gun with the "Iowa idea." In other words,

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they do not give themselves the intellectual satisfaction of distinguishing among the various waves of Western invasion, the different groups who have made the West; and some of the most illuminating and fascinating chapters of the American experiment are closed to them. There are no more cowboys; guns are flourished in New York more frequently than on the "lone prairie"; and no one in any case could be more fundamentally antagonistic to the "Iowa idea" or the Utopian fallacies of Mr. William Allen White of Kansas than the cowboy or the men who have inherited from him. In spite of the migratory habit of our population, the weaving back and forth across the continent of the native American stock, certain crystallizations have taken place. The states have been settled somehow, and have slowly developed distinguishing traits and points of view. More surely they have allied themselves with their neighbors; and the moral and social unit is the group, the section, not the single commonwealth. Boundaries melt into each other, to be sure; yet there is as obvious, as sensible a difference between Middle West and Far West as between New England and the "solid South."

To disentangle the real West—which is, nowadays, the Far West—from the Middle West and the East, and show its human and social differ-

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ences as they appear to the Eastern pilgrim is the object of these paragraphs. Nor can it be done without one or two historical allusions. There has been more than one human and moral influence at work in the plains and mountain states; and the social tone of the Far West derives in some measure from them all. Impressionistic the traveller must frankly be. But certain serious impressions, gained long ago and deepened and reinforced each time the writer has sojourned in our Far West, would seem to have at least external validity: the more so that they are confirmed by other people of longer and more varied experience. The history books seem merely to dot the "i's" and add corroborative footnotes. Important? Well, that is as each citizen sees it. What one can vouch for is this: that between the Missouri River and the Pacific Ocean there sprang into being in the nineteenth century a more original, a more vital and romantic social code—or civilization if you prefer—than any our country has seen since Colonial days.

We are very near to losing it, as we are losing the conditions that nurtured it, and the homogeneous, picked breed of men who created it. But it was perhaps America's most original contribution to social history. As we all become more alike, it tends to fade and merge in the chaotic

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American democracy. Yet by just so much as it still shapes and colors the Far Western attitude to life is the Far Western attitude admirable, interesting, superior.

All travellers from inland know the moment when they have the authentic sense of the sea. It may yet be miles away; but there comes an instant when one is aware of its influence—on the soil, the atmosphere, and no less on the human spirit. There is a point on the Union Pacific Railroad where you pass with equal definiteness from the Middle to the Far West. A boundary, a sort of Mizpah stone of warning, might be set up at North Platte, Nebraska, without belying the fact. All North Platte actually does is to advertise itself engagingly as "Buffalo Bill's town." Perhaps, set in that vast plain, that is all it can do. Yet when you pass westward from North Platte, you realize that something is happening: the air changes, the land seems to be gathering itself for its long and slow approach to the Great Divide; these are different winds upon your face, these are horizons that will presently become Wyoming and the high plains; not yet do you see mountains, but for the first time since you left home you feel them imminent. You have reached the real West, and there are confirmations all about you as subtle and strong as a perfume in your nostrils. Western

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Nebraska belongs as definitely to the Far West as eastern Nebraska to the Middle West. You cannot demonstrate it any more than you can demonstrate the inward and spiritual grace of a sacrament: you merely know.

Before saying why, we had best say what. The conception of what the Westernness of the West consists in forms very slowly in the Eastern mind, packed with prejudices and traditions of another sort. It takes a sharp shock of revelation, a smashingly obvious superiority, to shake him free so that he can note and judge impersonally. My own shock came long ago when I was forced to perceive, as clearly as you perceive a sunset or a waterfall, the infinitely better manners of the West. Frankly, I had never either at home or in Europe seen manners like that; and when I first returned from the Pacific to the Atlantic seaboard, everybody seemed very rowdy, and rude, and vulgar. The man in the street was either servile or insolent; whereas in the Far West, whether he was a bank official or a section hand, he was neither. Self-respect, dignity, and generous consideration of other people's comfort were traits one expected to find, if anywhere, only in the rare and civilized; but in the West one found them in the common man. He would do anything he could for you, taking infinite trouble even though you

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were a stranger; but he would not intrude on your moral privacy (or wish you to intrude on his) by the lightest question or any hint of self-confession.

Christians have, presumably, a copyright on the Golden Rule; but wherever there has been a civilized and noble code, the Golden Rule, under whatever name, has been observed. Doing unto others as you would that they should do unto you *is* courtesy. The test of manners may be—is—observance of the Golden Rule; beyond that, what a man wants you to do unto him is a test of his quality. The Westerner treated you, obviously, as he wished to be treated; in so far he was superior to other mortals. A further point was that what he gave and desired was treatment of a peculiarly civilized sort. He was as solicitous for your dignity as for your comfort. Not giving himself away, he had no vulgar desire that you should give yourself away. This was democracy, you reflected, but democracy in a finer, a more nearly ideal aspect, rejecting the terrible intimacies, the brash self-assertiveness, the canonization of mediocrity, that we have had only too much reason to link with the term. The tacit assumption of equality among citizens is the first social principle of democracy. When the assumption becomes vocal, the principle has degenerated. As soon as a man says "I am as good as you are"—whether he says it col-

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lectively or individually—he has already gone far to prove that he lies. When on the other hand the assumption—though silent—is of inequality, the democratic principle has been rejected. In the real West the assumption was both tacit and sincere.

Any complicated society soon develops or reveals immense inequalities—of fortune, of achievement, of natural gifts, of mental and moral equipment, of type. The old dream of equal opportunity, even, is hard to realize. A vote matters so much less than many other things a man can hold in his hand! The American answer to the crushing fact that men are not even born equal has tended—when it has been the wrong answer—to be not servility but insolence. Even in the industrial East, we are as yet kinder, I believe, than in European countries, but there can be no question that doubts and paradoxes have affected our manners—our conception of the natural bearing of man to man. There is no worse combination than an inferiority complex linked with the will to power; and to that combination large portions of our democracy have fallen prey. It is because the last authentic haunts of the original American ideals, the distinctively American social philosophy, are to be found in the Far West that the Far West is so illuminating and, humanly, so exhilarating a spectacle.

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One psychological phenomenon is very striking to the Easterner as he moves about the land west of the Great Divide; the more striking that it was unexpected. I refer to the passionate prejudice of all Far Westerners against the Middle West. We of the East are often supposed to be snobbish about our nearness to the Atlantic Ocean and the cradle of our history. It is a tradition—is it not?—that we look down on everything west of the thirteen original colonies. But we are generous, catholic, humble even, beside our fellow-countryman from beyond the Rocky Mountains when it comes to passing judgment on the great Mississippi valley. Really charming people on the Coast almost spit or “make horns” when Iowa, Kansas, or Illinois is mentioned. If you are from the effete East, you are at all events an American and a fellow-citizen; they can “get together” with you; but if you are from the Middle West, you are, in their eyes, hardly a real American at all—until, that is, you have proved yourself as an individual.

So surprising a phenomenon as this was a thing to be probed, if possible. Jealousy it could hardly be, for there is nothing to make a Washingtonian, an Oregonian, a Californian, a Utahn jealous of a Kansan, an Iowan, an Ohioan. In no inevitable way do they interfere with each other. You cannot ask a foreigner why he is foreign; you cannot ask

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a Westerner why he has different prejudices from the Easterner. It had to come out, little by little, in quiet talk and allusions carefully analyzed. I offer the results of investigation—for what they are worth, only.

One seems to make out that they hate the Middle Westerner because they feel that he has gone back on his American heritage; because he seems to them to have perverted liberty and lost most of the by-products of liberty. They dislike what they consider his coercive spirit, his evangelical determination to turn the whole nation into his private laboratory. They dislike his deliberate conception of an ocean as a barrier instead of a highway. They dislike his lack of respect for minorities, they dislike the very bases of his respects, his canons of moral taste. They feel the average Middle Westerner to be a small-town man with a small-town mind, and the small-town mind is abhorrent to the average Westerner. It must be said that their fire is not always a pure flame, for they are human—they dislike also his voice, his accent, his manners, and his clothes. "You cannot indict a whole nation"; nor can you indict a whole section of a vast country. To protests registered in the interest of justice they reply, faithfully enough: "You must remember that we see the worst of them here, not the best." Which

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is probably true. "Casual" labor is not the best of labor; nor is the "casual" citizen the best of citizens. The pioneer is one man, the drifter quite another. The fact remains that the typical democracy of the Middle West is profoundly unsympathetic to Far Westerners; and being newer, freer, happier than the East, they are not cowed by it or cynically resigned. They hate it, and they say they hate it; and they are still, we must remember, in the mood of men who feel themselves capable of moulding history rather than of enduring it.

Nothing is so simple as all that; but it seems to be, as far as one can analyze it, a rough sketch of their attitude—faithful in outline, at least, to fact. It is why Los Angeles has no friends west of Kansas, Nebraska, and Dakota. It is why even San Francisco mitigates its scorn if you can prove that you come from east of Pittsburgh and Buffalo. Immensely unlucky, on the whole, I believe the prejudice to be; but neither in sight of Pike's Peak, or Rainier, or the Sangre de Cristo will you be allowed to forget it.

To puzzled folk who would argue that Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and all the Old Northwest were settled by pioneers from east of the Alleghenies, and that the American pioneer is the American pioneer, whether he moved west-

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ward in 1800 or in 1850—that the men who pushed their way to the Ohio and then to the Mississippi were not only the actual but the spiritual fathers of the men who pushed their way to the Snake and the Columbia, to San Francisco Bay and to the Rio Grande—they nod in semi-agreement. Two or three important facts must, however, be mentioned in the interests of accurate differentiation. With all due respect to Daniel Boone and his eighteenth-century coevals, most of the Middle Western pioneering was an easier and less problematical sort than the conquering of the remoter territory across the Mississippi. They took it in short stages; they passed from settlement to settlement; and they never broke with the East. The “edge of cultivation” moved steadily westward; but there was no vast interval, there were no terrific leaps of two thousand miles across the wilderness into the unknown or the half-suspected. Hamlin Garland’s *Son of the Middle Border* is one of the most interesting of documents for the spirit of the Middle Western pioneers. It describes the Western lure and the confronted hardships in no uncertain terms. Yet even this is a different epic from those of the Oregon and Santa Fé Trails. The significant fact is that Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and so on built themselves, as soon as they were settled, into the life of the nation.

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They were next door to the maritime states, and they dragged only a lengthening chain—never a broken one. One reason, no doubt, why historians have spent themselves rather on the Middle than on the Far West is that the Middle West was settled at a time of profound political changes, and bore its notable part in affecting those changes. No one needs to be told that the Middle West and the Old Northwest have grown steadily, since their colonization, in political power and national importance. The people who settled the states between the Alleghenies and the Missouri River not only brought many convictions with them, but never separated themselves from the national destinies. “The wild men from Missouri” (in Josiah Quincy’s terrified phrase) *were* admitted to the national councils. Civilization was continuous, if thin, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi.

The Far Western states, however, were quite another matter. When folk took the Oregon Trail, they deliberately put two thousand miles between themselves and the last outposts of typical American life. The Dakotas, western Kansas and Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho—these were a vast Indian territory over which the buffalo ranged, hunted by savages. They came out, west of the Rockies, on the other side of all that—very far on the other side. Between them

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and the nation functioning normally were the vast stretches that to this day are lonely and very sparsely inhabited. They were of necessity divorced from national politics. Even when they acquired statehood and senators, their proportional representation was small compared with the Middle West and the East. They have not, up to date, counted much in the political sum of things. Though Mr. Borah or Mr. Smoot or Mr. Johnson may be well known on Capitol Hill, the attitude to life of their constituents is not. The Far West is not yet sufficiently populated to make its feeling prevail. It will be a long time before any mountain state is dubbed "Mother of Presidents," and in every presidential campaign we are made to realize afresh, from counting of noses and dickering of delegations, that the Far West is still politically unimportant. These states are not "pivotal," nor does their "doubtfulness" matter.

Politically, the pioneers of these new lands may have been insignificant. Their very insignificance, their withdrawal from the controversies of the capital, left them freer. Far away from the seat of law, they made their own laws, and enforced them. You could not ask Congress—even had it been willing—to legislate effectively for the cattle-range and the mining-camp; and between the Missouri and the Sierras there was practically

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nothing but cattle and minerals. The mining-camp is a special human phenomenon, and one of its most glaring characteristics is impermanence. When the precious metals are exhausted, the mushroom population moves. You do not find citizens in mining camps, though once out of the camp the miner may make an excellent citizen. I am not speaking of places like Bingham, Utah, or Butte, Montana, where copper mining has become an industry as well defined as the mining of coal or the forging of steel. I refer rather to the many spots on earth's surface—in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, California—where men dug and "washed" feverishly for a time, on their own, for gold; made or never made, or lost or kept their individual "piles," and moved on. Gold or silver mining never created a civilization *on the spot*. The precious metals are too ephemeral and quickly exhausted. Even the Comstock Lode petered out, and Goldfield is in ruins. Nothing in the way of human and social life has been built up in the Klondike.

When the agriculturalists came, they made a life, because they settled, cultivated, built, established themselves. Many ideals conflicted in the hearts of the first pioneers. The promise of gold made many of them cast away their ploughs. But the pioneers of the Oregon Trail were prepon-

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deratingly men who wished to settle down and cultivate the land, and make a civilization such as they understood. They carried to their new habitations the ideals of the East and the Middle West whence they had come—but they escaped many intervening chapters of history, and those ideals were, and remained, to some extent simple, unconfused, and so far archaic. They were the pick of the plain men of their time; adventure was in their blood, and stark courage, or they would not have journeyed two thousand miles in the wilderness. The pioneer—the real pioneer—may be ignorant, but he is not consumed with petty prejudices and preoccupations. If he were, he would have stayed at home.

The honest-to-goodness farmers, however, in the 'forties and 'fifties pushed through to what are now the Coast States. Between eastern Nebraska and the Sierras you find very little farming, even now. The Dakotas and eastern Montana are a granary, and the Mormons have cultivated a lot of Utah; but western Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, western Kansas, and Nebraska, New Mexico, western Texas were not given over to cultivation of the soil—are not strikingly so given to-day. Roughly speaking, they were the cattle country; and the code of the cattle country counts more than any other one thing—even more than

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the mining camp—in the distinctive tradition of the West. That Open Range which ceased long since to be “open,” which has very nearly ceased to be a cattle range at all, stretched from the Rio Grande to the Canadian border; and nearly all the white men who inhabited it were cattlemen. In the 'sixties they drove the cattle from old Mexico to northern Montana—read Andy Adams's *Log of a Cowboy* if you want to know how. Later, the vast cattle ranches, privately owned, grew up with their own herds and their own men to oversee the herds—and eventually deliver them at the railway. The cowboy was king over a good third of our country for many years.

“Then came the terrible farmers—
Nothing of play *they* knew.”

The passing of the great ranges, of the cowboy, of that whole period of social history is one of the sad features of our quick—our almost miraculously swift—expansion. All one can say is that the cattlemen ruled the West long enough to make a serious contribution to civilization, and, as far as one can tell, that contribution was, in the words of the White Knight, absolutely their own invention. We speak frequently of living in a free country—meaning, presumably, a democracy. But the West really was, for a good many decades, a free country. It had only the loosest relation to the national

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government, and no relation at all to Eastern conditions. When the white men came, the cattle and the horses were wild, the land was nobody's property (for the Indian claims were successfully voided before the white onrush), the stock was yours for the catching and the branding, and the range was open. Even with private possession of lands and herds there were room enough, debatable ground enough, and mavericks enough, to perpetuate in substance the old conditions—until the sedentary farmer began to fence in the water holes. The towns were few and widely separated, and dependent, except near the mines, on the whole business of raising and shipping the cattle. It was cattle country—cattle country from old Mexico to Montana, from the Missouri to the Rockies. And of all influences brought to bear on the West, the code of the cattle country and of its shifting frontier was morally most striking, most potent, most "different."

It is not my business—any more than it is in my power—to write the social history of the cattle country. Mr. Philip Rollins has dealt with that in his admirable book *The Cowboy*; and his many readers hope that he will unpack much more from his abounding store of knowledge. The mere Easterner who loves the West can only note in passing some of the traits that still linger in West-

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ern life and manners from the days when the cowboy—and he alone—was the citizen. The Far West was not made by “plaster saints”—if it had been, it would not have developed such fine manners—but it could not have been made at all without certain great and fundamental virtues, liberally inherited and carefully cherished. Roughly speaking, one makes out from both written records and such human exponents as one has been privileged to encounter at first or second hand, that those virtues were courage, honesty, kindness, and chivalry. By courage one means courage such as the average modern man, in his protected life, never even feels the need of. By honesty one means an honesty so rigid that a thief is not supposed to be fit to live, or a lie to pass the lips save for loyalty’s sake. By kindness one means a kindness that sacrifices its own life to the needs of a stranger. By chivalry one means an attitude to women that—so far as one knows history—has never been met with elsewhere.

They built up for themselves, apparently, a very rigid if unwritten law. It was merely a codification of the group decisions of brave men who looked daily on the bright face of danger. It dealt with essentials because they dealt with essentials—hunger, thirst, solitude, and parti-colored peril. They decided for themselves where honor

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lay. To their eternal credit be it said, what they created was not simply a courageous but a complicated law of life. They were very fine gentlemen even if far, far removed from the Schools and the Court. On the romantic side they had, of course, a wonderful background to stand against. They were physically adequate to the demands of a life that gave them no adventitious aids. "As to the frontiersmen . . . I knew them well," says Eugene Manlove Rhodes tersely. "They were five feet eleven, they weighed a hundred and sixty-four pounds, and they were made of watch-springs, whalebone and dynamite." They could ride and shoot superlatively, and hardship winnowed out their souls. They could hold their tongues into the very jaws of death. They were neither avaricious nor lustful. And they cared not a tinker's dam for their good report *except* with those whom they privately knew to be their peers. That Hermes Trismegistus would have let down the bars of his "conditional immortality" for them, there can be no manner of doubt.

The Western "bad man" is as famous as the cowboy; and no one doubts that he existed. The code was presumably evolved, in large measure, precisely to deal with him. Naturally, too, various minor virtues went by the board. They gambled, they drank, they blasphemed. They lacked the

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well-known refining influence of woman—which is, probably, one reason why they offered woman the benefit of every doubt, and could have given Sir Walter Raleigh points on manners to the weaker sex. It is, I believe, a platitude that punctilio is always highly developed where every man goes armed. It may also be a platitude that women, like everything else, are most valued where they are rare sights. It ought to be a platitude that the frontier and the wilderness suggest a different code from the crowded haunts of men. Our point is that certain conditions prevailed in the West, and bore certain moral and social results: that some of those conditions still prevail, and that those moral and social results are still effective. I have heard *faits divers* of Western life reported, from Arizona to Idaho; and not only the substance of the tales but the manner of telling and the attitude of the narrator are quite different from what we hear at home. Mountain and desert alter very little, and the old cattle country is a lonely land to-day. Men still outnumber women in the plains and mountain states. In spite of motor cars, a man can turn centaur at need.

Professor Frederick Turner lays great stress on the individualism of the Middle Western pioneer. The industrialized and widely farmed Middle West is less individualistic than of old, after sev-

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enty-five to a hundred years. But the Far West still is individualistic within its own code. Its nineteenth century development has been different—throwing back, one cannot but feel, not only to the spirit of the pioneer but also to what America started out to be. The Westerner must think collectively, like anyone else; but in a country where a man can ride all day without meeting another human being—where he reckons his distances not between towns or human habitations but between mountain ranges or forks of a great river—his collective consciousness is bound to be that of the wide-flung clan rather than that of the close-knit, highly organized community or party. “Stranger” and “pardner” are still main terms of differentiation; “lady” still a common form of address to woman. It is not presumably up to you nowadays, when you meet another man, to keep your hands obviously innocent of approach to a gun; but the establishing of contacts still savors of the old punctilio.

The heart of the matter, one fancies, is this: that the West is aristocratic in temper, in just the way that most of the American colonists meant the country to be. Only—and this was always the difference between us and Europe—any man might be an aristocrat if he had it in him. What our forefathers objected to was not one man’s being

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better than another; what they objected to was one man's being better than another *if he was not*. It should not be accident that raised him above his fellows: it should be his private worth, his personal distinction. Democracy, as we have said, was held to be the proper culture for a natural aristocracy. Certain Eastern communities, clinging to European tradition, built up, as far as it lay in their power, an imitative social order. In the maritime states some people still talk of "family" and ancestral glories, living parasitically on a shadowy past. But these were always a small fraction of the American people; and these were not the folk that made any part of our country west of the Alleghenies.

The Middle West was settled from New England, New York, and the old Southern States; but the careful historian points out to you that it was not the East India merchant or the Virginia planter who went pioneering. It was the men of the backwoods, upcountry, farmer stock—the people who had adventure, unconventionality, individualism in their blood, and set little store by their personal inheritance. The Middle West proceeded to draw a large foreign population, chiefly German and Scandinavian; it industrialized itself rapidly; it dotted itself over with small towns. The Far West has never been industrialized; and

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though such towns as are there are small, the town has not yet become the main social organism. Mr. Sinclair Lewis could not have placed his Gopher Prairie in that third of our land which was the cattle country; he could hardly have made his Babbitt a native of the Far West. Neither would have been true. The towns are as small as Gopher Prairie, but they are different—unless, like Los Angeles, they are merely places where Gopher Prairie has settled in its thousands, creating itself anew on a vaster scale. The Middle Western type of democracy is unsympathetic, as we said, to the Far West; and largely, one comes at last to feel, because the Far West is still aristocratic in temper and fundamental conviction.

They asked no questions, one gathers, in the early West. Life was all an Everlasting Now, and a man was expected to prove himself only from the moment when he first drifted over the lonely horizon. Who he was, whence he came, what he had done and been, were his own affair. But once on the spot, he had to live up to that rigid law. The man who kept it intact at every point was a prince among princes; the man who broke it was outcast. It was as hard, one makes out, for the man who did not make the code his own to be free of the goodly fellowship, as for the camel to pass through the needle's eye, or for the gentleman

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who lacked thirty-four quarterings to be invited by the Emperor Francis Joseph to a Court ball "*im Hof.*"

You could neither inherit nor pay your way in. The basis of selection was something quite new in human history, as the code itself was new; but it was perfectly clear and self-conscious, and the Far West still tends to judge men by those standards. Folk in the Far West still tend to live up to them; are still proud, courageous, dignified, unaffected (the code was very hard on affectations) and kind. Non-essentials still count less to the Westerner than to any other American. Among no other fellow-citizens do you feel both your integrity and your welfare so respected. You see few cowboys now in the cattle country, but you still see men "made of watch-springs, whalebone and dynamite." Once there *were* giants in the land, and their dead hand is not quite relaxed.

"Movie stuff?" No, not really; though movies, one must grant, are about the last hint left, for the average citizen, of that picturesqueness; and at that, most "Westerns" are shoddy spectacles, with nothing but a little good scenery and trick riding to recommend them. They are as conventional, as devoid of convincing quality as the Mounted Police pictures, of which, apparently, a certain number are released mechanically every

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year. The hold of the "Wild West" fiction—shockingly bad as literature—as of that which concerns the Northwest Mounted, is not in the sensationalism thereof but in the residuum of truth at the heart of all the nonsense. If you want conviction to descend upon you, read Philip Rollins or Andy Adams or the contemporary documents preserved in Thwaites—not those popular novelists of the West, whose prose would make the most authentic records unconvincing. Gather, as far as you are able, the truth from the lips of the men who knew the life. Find the vestiges of frontier life and philosophy where you can; but never doubt that it was real, and that not all the vestiges are faked.

Only the other day a New York newspaper printed half a column of news about the Northwest Mounted (now, I believe, the Canadian Royal Mounted) which made the motion pictures look like the feeble imaginings of an adolescent clerk. A little matter of justice done on Arctic Eskimos of Prince Albert Sound: a "mountie" journeying two thousand miles by steamer, canoe, and dog sled to carry the death warrants to Herschell Island—which is so far north in the Arctic that on most maps of North America you cannot find it. For the Mounted as for the "Wild West" the sober history, the journal of fact, are more thrill-

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ing than any third-rate fiction can be; the truth is better than the legend. The man of Anglo-Saxon tradition deals with the problems of the wilderness in a way peculiar to himself; and either side of the border the tale is much the same.

A good many millions of our citizens during the last year have seen *The Covered Wagon*, and probably this will be the most vivid conception most of them will ever have of the Oregon Trail. There are few people anywhere who will take the trouble to read history; and a film like *The Covered Wagon* becomes a textbook for the nation. The intellectuals may deplore the fact, but they may as well face it. You or I may delve in Thwaites; but Babbitt and all the sub-Babbitts do not. Take it or leave it: what our generation knows about the Oregon Trail it will have learned not from Parkman or Taylor, or a dozen other diarists or historians, but from the picture of *The Covered Wagon*. We may be grateful that it is on the whole so fine and epical a thing. The story is nothing; the individual acting is negligible; the protagonist is the great cavarán itself, making its way across that authentic landscape. To anyone with the historic imagination even faintly developed, the film is appealing and suggestive. These were chapters that had to be written before the Coast could be settled. The sanctity of the plough

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and the ancestral furniture are well stressed; and the great facts of birth and death in the moving caravan are poignant enough, in all conscience.

But the Oregon Trail was only one element in the settling of the West; its goal was what are now the states of Oregon and Washington. The vast tract between the Missouri and the Sierras was something for the Oregon pioneers—with their ploughs and their walnut bureaus, their women-folk and their flower seeds—to cross and put behind them; and in *The Covered Wagon*, valuable though it is and deserving of its extraordinary success (even highbrows go to see *The Covered Wagon*, and it ran over a year on Broadway), there is no hint of the destinies of that country across which they trekked, leaving it well behind them on the hither side of the Cascades. In so far as the film gives any suggestion of human types—it gives very little—it ignores the breed of men who were to make the cattle country. In the very hour of beholding *The Covered Wagon*, the reaction of the spectator who would bring history to bear on Western literature and Western pictures alike is roughly as follows: magnificent in its way, yes, but this does not show you the West that made the code; this is mere transplanted East; this is what cultivated the ripe valleys of the Northwest and made communities on the Coast for its chil-

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dren. This does not explain Wyoming, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, western Kansas and Nebraska, and Texas. Over most of that country few ploughs are driven, few towns have flourished; the mountains are unconquered and the plains still lonely and waterless.

The human heritage and creation of *that* land—widely and profoundly effective as they were—are not here, do not pretend to be. Nor yet in the book or the picture where the cowboy gallops after the express train and, from his saddle, deposits the stranded heroine neatly and safely on the observation platform. On the screen, only William S. Hart, apparently, can give with subtlety and precision the human aspect of that West about which we have been talking. I have never happened to see that accomplished actor take a cowboy part; but it is a fact that, given William S. Hart, a dozen acres of desert, one paint horse, two guns, and a hint of immediate danger just off-stage, and you have the atmosphere in which the code of the far West was born and grew into temporary control of a third of our great land. A thousand "extras" could not turn the trick so well. What he does in any given picture matters little; but the way he does it is history. No—if, short of first-hand experience, you want to know—you must not read the Western fiction or see the average Western film.

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You must read only the contemporary documents that have been preserved, the history, and the literature that is not fiction; and for conviction through the visual medium watch William S. Hart and him alone. The others are mere doers of stunts upon the screen; they have no more psychologic validity than the express train crashing through the broken bridge or the tenement house on fire. "Movie stuff"? Truth to tell, a lot of what is written and told and pictured of the West deserves only that opprobrious phrase. But the fact that the West has been discredited by unvarnished art does not prove that there was no West on which were built these poor contrivances.

Vestiges, as we said, and vestiges only, for the present-day traveller in the land. Yet the vestiges are there, not yet fossilized for paleontologists. It is not so long ago that "Powder River" descended annually in pomp upon Albuquerque; not so many years ago that Bert Lauzun meditated with us above the Grand Canyon at Hopi Point; a bare three years since my husband had the pleasure of travelling with a famous bandit and two perfect sheriffs across the Cascades; not, after all, an immemorial interval since the day when all my own path was made plain for me, for a thousand miles of travel, by telegrams and recommendations from and to total strangers. The sunburned eyes, the

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firm lips, the tall leanness, the wrist of steel have not yet passed from the human group. Courtesy is still finer, dignity more implicit, than elsewhere. The wide spaces give every man room to breathe; and what that means in moral poise is most sharply felt by the confirmed haunter of cities.

The mountains, the buttes, the mesas prevent that agoraphobia which seems often to descend upon the prairie-dweller. It is not in the national parks that you will find these vestiges, for there they are obscured by the tourists. But push off into the desert, or stay your feet in the lonely settlement; ask anywhere for help or counsel from a native son or daughter, and you will feel that firmer, safer, kinder, more hopeful code enveloping you. That doctrine of freedom, that conception of personal dignity still mould the Western mind and manner. There is neither Gotham nor Gopher Prairie between the Missouri and the Pacific, unless you count Los Angeles a Gopher Prairie that longs to be a Gotham.

The wise move for the Easterner would be to know and to cherish the Far Western temper; to hold up the hands of the people who have still a chance of keeping those ideals. That—with immigration and oil, and exploitation political and commercial—the special Western civilization must eventually pass, is fairly certain. But every addi-

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tional year of life it has is so much to the good; and to recognize, define, respect it may help us a little, even though we are long past the state of things that would enable us to imitate it. America is fast growing unrecognizable as America: it is turning into a quite different phenomenon by the same name. Our origins, however, are not so far back that we have any right to forget them as yet. In the sheer interest of democracy, it can do us no harm to ponder on the one period of our history, the one section of our country wherein democracy became, for a time, in the hands of men who could take its measure, a logical, a desirable, a workable theory, neither glorifying Mammon nor canonizing mediocrity.

That part of our Eastern civilization which is purely imitative of Europe must pass—if only because Europe is no longer there, in the same sense, to be imitated. The Great War was such a break in social continuity as the generations have seldom seen. That we shall forsake, on the other hand, our narrower chauvinism is a matter of hope rather than of belief. The founders of the Republic have been pretty well discredited now, except for holiday purposes. We were bound to develop, and, in so far as we faced unforeseen conditions, to develop away from them. They could not foresee industrialism or our mixture of popu-

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lations or even our gigantic natural resources. But to the romantic citizen who carries America very deep in his heart it becomes a matter of prime importance to follow the current of their social and political philosophy wherever it may chance to flow. The democracy of the New England village, the democracy of Thomas Jefferson of Monticello, were as far removed as oligarchy or monarchy from the democracy that is "featured" on Capitol Hill to-day. But those early democrats—aristocrats at heart—would have understood the men who made the Far West. The cattle country in the 'sixties and 'seventies would perhaps have frightened Gouverneur Morris or Josiah Quincy, but it would not have terrified George Washington or Thomas Jefferson. They would have recognized the Far Western philosophy as logically if somewhat unexpectedly American. They would have washed their hands ritually of any responsibility for Babbitt—but that, as the Far West will explain in detail if you will listen to it, is another matter.

Chapter Two

SALT LAKE : THE CITY OF THE SAINTS

THE city of Brigham Young has had, up to date, a fate as peculiar as its people. The only way in which I can state it satisfactorily to myself is this: the Gentile world has had a Mormon complex, and Gentile visitors to Salt Lake City have been so busy staring at, and whispering about, the Latter Day Saints and their ways and works that they have never lifted their eyes higher than the highest spire of the Mormon Temple. The illiterate ask, even in this year of grace, if it is true that Mormons have horns; the average soul wonders in his secret heart if polygamy is still practised; the intellectuals immediately busy themselves acquiring "dope" on the political situation. But the romantic citizen, experiencing Salt Lake for the first time, goes about registering something between awe and amaze. Of all the people I have known who have been in Salt Lake City, none has ever taken the trouble to say that it is, simply, one of the most beautiful towns on the planet. The Salt Lake newspapers, in their en-

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gaging Western way, talk about "selling" Salt Lake, and promoting three-day stop-overs in place of twenty-four-hour waits. According to them, Salt Lake is a place where, between the grandeur of the Royal Gorge and the oddity of the Yellowstone, people stop and change trains. The newspapers do not like it. They see no reason why Salt Lake should not have its fair share of tourists. They say, rather pathetically, that the finest scenery in the country lies within a five-hundred-mile radius if you take Salt Lake as a pivotal centre. I was always wanting to drop into a newspaper office and beg the staff not to bother about pivotal centres and radii. The way to sell Salt Lake is to tell the truth about it: namely, that in itself it is one of the most beautiful things in the world. Short of San Francisco Bay, I know of no urban setting in the United States to compare with this. As for selling it—tourists, beauty-bent, should pay out their solid substance for Salt Lake, and keep the small change for the national parks. (No disrespect is intended to the national parks.)

The unexpected hits one harder than the foreseen fact; and day by day we felt like Balkis, who said, "The half was not told me." Nothing had been told us—except how much the Mormon Church counts, or does not count, in national politics. That spacious valley lying between the snow-

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topped Wasatches on the east and the dreamy Oquirrh on the west, the far glitter of the Great Salt Lake on one horizon replying across the miles to the streams that flash their silver down all the countless canyons of the Wasatch Range—that valley, wide incredibly, and filled to its distant brim with green that turns, at the edge of the Rockies, to the purple of the north and the blue of Italy: no—no one had ever mentioned that valley. We had heard and read—who has not?—of the Lion House, and the Beehive House, and Amelia Palace (torn down now) and the Tabernacle and the Temple; but I had never heard of the canyons of the Wasatch Range, or what the simple word “sunset” can mean in Salt Lake City. Many people have discussed the Mormon Temple æsthetically, pro and con, but no one had ever told us of the thrill to be had by winding down the tortuous defiles of Emigration Canyon to the very spot where the pioneers emerged to look out over the valley, and Brigham Young said, “This is the place.” We had always known that Salt Lake City was “interesting,” but the rest had been silence. Truly, we have all had a Mormon complex.

Salt Lake *is* interesting; and there would be no sense in pretending that it is not the Mormon Church which has given it its interest, as well as much of its beauty, situation apart. Brigham

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Young, unlike Joseph Smith the Prophet, was not much given to revelations; but he was assuredly a great pioneer, and a man of powerful and constructive mind. To Brigham Young it is due that the barren valley over which he gazed from the mouth of Emigration Canyon is now so densely green with trees; to him we owe the wide and noble streets of the city—never, from the first, allowed to grow up haphazard; he and none other was responsible for the first and promptest irrigation in the Western desert. God himself may have sent the sea gulls (it is a penitentiary offence to kill a sea gull in Utah) to save the crops from the locusts and the Saints from starvation; but it was undoubtedly Brigham Young who taught the people that their prosperity must come from agriculture. The gold rush of '49 followed close upon the first Mormon exodus, and if the state was to prosper, they could not spare their young men to the California gold fields. So mining was forbidden to them—and, in consequence, Utah is very different from Nevada. I am told that individual Mormons do now concern themselves with Utah Copper; but at least they were withheld from mining long enough to make the desert blossom like the rose. They are still, preponderatingly, an agricultural people. Brigham Young meant that they should be. He had notions, one supposes,

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of founding an independent state in that wilderness which belonged vaguely to Mexico and practically to anybody who cared to take it. It was his curious luck that, entering Utah in 1847, he should have been confronted with the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. One cannot tell precisely what would have happened had he had a few decades, instead of a few months, in which to consolidate his little empire. That is one of the fascinating conundrums of history. In spite of his coarse, dour features and his unlovely personality; in spite of his twenty-seven wives and his two hundred and fifty-odd descendants in the late war—in spite of all his moral aberrations and his patriarchal lack of charm, Brigham Young was a great man, who did his strange but significant part in making the West.

There was a time when apostate Mormons were listened to, by ladies' missionary societies, with as passionate an interest as "escaped nuns." I do not know if the fashion still holds. Nor am I to be taken as speaking lightly of a "Mormon menace," if such a thing there be. A great deal has been said and written on both sides of the controversy. We ourselves could do no more, in a brief stay, than scratch the surface of the Mormon question; especially as, even among Gentiles of long residence, you hear quite different attitudes expressed.

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When the educated Gentile population of Salt Lake, which has every reason for solidarity, does not agree within itself about the power and purposes of the Mormon Church, what is a mere Easterner to think?

The social situation is more or less what you would expect. On the whole, Gentiles and Mormons do not mix much. I have heard even that denied; but the fact that the membership of the country club is only ten per cent, or less, Mormon in character, tends to bear out the general statement. Socially, the analogy would seem to be with the Quakers in earlier generations in the East. The peculiar tenets of the Mormon faith would keep "good" Mormons out of a Gentile whirl. All vices—including tobacco, tea, and coffee—are forbidden the strict Mormon. You cannot live the social life with people who eat and drink and amuse themselves in a totally different way from yourself. Take the little matter of "endowment robes," which good Mormons must wear. I have never seen these "L. D. S. garments," except vaguely, in advertisements and shop-windows, but I believe they are theoretically both thick and high—certainly things that would preclude the wearing of evening frocks. I know that strict Mormons of the old-fashioned type do not permit their daughters to wear low-necked and

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short-sleeved dresses—whether because of the endowment robes, or in the general interest of morals, I cannot say. They have many of the social tenets of the narrower Protestant sects. At all events, the Quaker analogy would seem to come in again. The younger people have been hard to hold; they have become inevitably more worldly—more “Gentile.” Very recently the Church has had to change the ruling about the endowment robes: permit thinner stuffs and more fashionable models. I daresay the young Mormons who want to wear B. V. D.’s and crêpe de chine lingerie do not, in their secret hearts, believe that the trump may sound at any moment, and that when it does sound they must, for salvation’s sake, be found in physical contact with the endowment robe. Who, indeed, shall say what the young Mormons believe? And the Mormon question—if there is a Mormon question—depends on that. Some Gentiles think that, as the young folk grow up into other intellectual and social atmospheres, the bottom will drop out of Mormonism. Other Gentiles think that even the generation that drinks and smokes and takes Joseph Smith lightly will still feel a real solidarity with its elders when it comes to an important issue; that, in the last analysis, they will always vote with the Church or act with the

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Church. They point also to the uninterrupted stream of Mormon converts.

Meanwhile, the social virtues of Mormonism have counted, in a sturdy and industrious stock. Consider a few details of pure Mormon belief, in their merely social aspects. Complete abstinence from liquor and tobacco is by no means necessary to health; but no one can say that it is physically bad for an agricultural race living in a good climate. Joseph Smith tried to make the Saints turn over all their worldly goods to the Church, but could not pull it off; so tithing was introduced as an inferior substitute. If you are going to surrender all your surplus, and one-tenth of everything you make, to the Church, you are going to be thrifty, because you are going to have to count your cash very carefully. A Church, moreover, that insists on sexual purity in its young men as well as its young women is doing no disservice to the physical welfare of the race.

There is every inducement to the good Mormon to marry young. If you do not marry, you do not enjoy the highest privileges of heaven. Remember that if you are a strict Mormon, you are married not until death shall part you, but for time *and* eternity. In the highest heaven of all—I do not pretend to understand the mystical complications of their scale of existences; it sounds like a sort

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of crude Gnosticism—the family is perpetuated precisely as it was constituted on earth. From careful reading of both sides of the case, one gathers that Joseph Smith instituted polygamy for very mixed reasons. But this doctrine of salvation, as one sees, can easily have become, later, a justification of polygamy. If you cannot become a god (as good Mormons do) without being married, of course you are going to marry. If you have children of your own, not simply for this perilous adventure of terrestrial life, but for an eternity of bliss, of course you are going to have children. Race suicide has never, I believe, been a Mormon complication; and one of the favorite picture post-cards is covered with the little faces of children and labelled “Utah’s Best Crop.” In the earliest days, the men must, as in all pioneer communities, have outnumbered the women; and while every woman, under polygamy, could have been some one’s wife (even if only a spiritual one), there may have been men who were reduced to the prospect of being only “ministering servants”—not gods—in Heaven. (I had always heard, myself, that it was only women for whom paradise was thus conditional—which would make polygamy very practical politics indeed; but the Book of Doctrine and Covenants seems to make it clear

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that the "unsealed" male is no better off than the "unsealed" female.)

From the very first, however, emigration to Utah was differently managed from other pioneer emigration. In other words, there has been from the beginning a steady stream of converts imported into the state; and there have been, from the beginning, great numbers of female converts. Any new or queer religion gathers many more women than men into its nets; and Mormonism can have been no exception. The supply of women was proportionately larger in Utah, from the first, than in any other of the Far Western territories. The Church declares, and I have never heard it denied, that when polygamy was going strong, no man was allowed to take a second wife without the consent of the first, or without satisfying his ward bishop that he was able to support her and the children she might bear to him. No good Mormon wife who knew her Doctrine and Covenants, and was aware of what the Lord said to Emma Smith (Joseph's first wife) on this subject, would refuse her consent to later marriages on her husband's part, for on her consent depended her happiness in a future life. But I have never seen another fact stated, which would seem to be an equally obvious corollary: namely, that in a primitive pioneer community the men who could afford

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plural marriages would inevitably be the strong men of the group—men who had made good against obstacles. It would not be the weakling stock, the failures, that would increase the population, on those terms. W. Hepworth Dixon declared, in the '60's, that no Saint was really looked up to in Salt Lake City who had not three wives. Certainly the many wives, the scores of children, would belong to the strongest and most sagacious. That provision was a rough and ready approximation to our modern "sterilization of the unfit." About selection of converts, in these days, I do not know; whether the Mormon missionaries take all who apply or not. (The Mormon Church, by the way, has never admitted negroes.) But though Italy was the first foreign country to receive a translation of the Book of Mormon (every Protestant sect sooner or later storms the gates of Rome) the bulk of their immigrants come from northern Europe—the British Isles, the Scandinavian and Teutonic countries. The Mormon Church is not troubled with Mediterranean detriments. It gets its white converts out of Protestant Europe, which is very good for the population of Utah. The problems of Ellis Island do not exist in Salt Lake City.

So much for some of the luckier by-products of Mormonism in Utah. Polygamy, of course, is

past; but these other teachings still prevail. No group of people has been more consistently accused of violence and bloodshed than the early Mormon pioneers. Their feuds with other American citizens began far east of Nauvoo. When Francis Parkman, as a young man, took to the Oregon Trail, both his own party and the genuine emigrants were as afraid of encountering Mormon trains as of encountering Pawnees or Crows. The Mormons bore a black reputation from St. Joseph to the Rockies. Yet as early as 1833 Joseph Smith was announcing that God himself established the Constitution of the United States. By 1843 he was receiving revelations to indicate that shedding innocent blood was the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. He had more than one revelation to affirm the absolute duty of obedience to temporal governors and the law of the land. The record of Mormonism is a very clean one in the matter of response to the country's call. They have never evaded military service—not since the Mexican War took from them young men they could ill spare. It is a tangled story, difficult to reconstruct. The earliest Mormons, one makes out, were largely frontier types, with the vices and virtues of the frontiersman heavily underscored. They seem to have been a sturdy, rough, illiterate lot, some of them hit hard by the wave of religious

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hysteria that was, in the 1820's and 1830's, taking such strange forms in our country; others, no doubt, as ready to make Mormonism a pretext for seeking their fortunes westward—and seeking them ruthlessly—as anything else. The companions of Joseph Smith apostatized freely; each of the three original witnesses to the golden plates and the Urim and Thummim apostatized, though the Church declares that they never denied having seen the golden plates. In spite of all sorts of convenient revelations, Joseph Smith had his troubles. There were even highbrows among the Saints who objected to the English of the divine messages; and Joseph had to have a special revelation to deal with his critics. (The Lord said, in effect: “If they do not like the style of my revelations, just let them try writing revelations themselves, and see if they can turn out anything as good.” No one except a Mormon is going to believe that the Lord said it; but one cannot deny that it is the perfect retort to most literary criticism.) A few sturdy Saints, however, stood by; and Brigham Young was probably a better leader for the great exodus than the Prophet would ever have been.

The only sinister thing remaining about Mormonism, one would say, is its solidarity. As a political bloc, it may be a menace. Any bloc is. And though the young Mormons of the third and

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fourth generations may break away into liberalism, there is the steady stream of converts, all so much of one social stratum that you come to feel there is, physically speaking, a genuine Mormon type. The younger American Mormon is like any other American; but most Mormons of foreign stock look like—and are—sons and daughters of the soil. As far as the future of Mormonism goes, it is pull Dick, pull devil, between the virtual apostasy of the intelligent young, and the constant addition of sincere converts. Who can tell which way the balance will tip in the decades to come? They have the strength of all narrow religious sects: the stubborn strength of the man who refuses, for what he considers conscience' sake, to listen to reason. Their peculiar tenets (now that polygamy is out of the way) are no more absurd than many others held by various sects whose name is not a curse to them. Their faith combines a primitive simplicity with odd outcroppings of mystical nonsense. Like everyone else, they claim to be the apostolic Church, and many of their most peculiar vagaries are mere literal interpretations of Biblical injunctions. The Bible is an extraordinary book; and if you take it all as equally inspired, you can find some very queer things to base your beliefs on—especially if you draw heavily on the Old Testament and the Apocalypse. I confess that I

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have never read more than a few pages of the Book of Mormon; but I know the Doctrine and Covenants (which are much more important) fairly well; and balderdash for balderdash, give me the Doctrine and Covenants, every time, in preference to most of the handbooks of the newer religions.

Baptism for the dead is one of the most curious of their practices—and in some ways the most intelligent. No convert likes to think that his unconverted parents or ancestors are missing Paradise. The Mormon convert, if he cares to pay the fee, need never have that uncomfortable sense. Basing their doctrine on certain texts in the New Testament, they permit you to enter the Temple and stand as baptismal proxy for your great-grandmother who never heard of Joseph Smith. She then inherits Heaven. It does not need to be a relative: George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, I believe, have both been baptized by proxy; and if you cared to follow up the good work of the whitewashing school of historians, you could, I suppose, be baptized for Queen Elizabeth or Lucrezia Borgia, and be sure of meeting those ladies, as good Mormons, in Heaven. This is only one of many things in the Old and New Testaments that the Latter Day Saints have taken over literally; and whether or not they meant it

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for a clever move, it is a clever one. To adopt a new faith must always give one a vicarious regret for the loved ones who died before they could know salvation. It would greatly palliate the strangeness of a new religion and a new country if you knew that those who sleep in the distant soil of home could, by your agency, be made free of the Paradise you have won. How widely the advantage is seized is shown by the fact that the handsome Church Offices house one of the finest collections of genealogical records in America—surpassed indeed, I believe, by only one other. Wherever you come from, you can be pretty sure of finding in that library any genealogical information that has been published concerning the place of your origin. It is worth noting, too, that the Church, in spite of its rigidity, has never admitted that the souls of little children could be damned.

Some prejudice exists among many Gentile inhabitants of Salt Lake City against patronizing Mormon institutions—the Z. C. M. I. (Zion Co-operative Mercantile Institution) or any business place that writes “Zion” or “Deseret” over its doors. Being a mere traveller, I naturally chose out the Mormon bank and the Mormon shops from the ruck of others. The Mormon bank officials are, in type, like nothing so much as Quaker merchants of the old school; the shop people are,

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to the casual stranger, simple and amiable folk. The prejudice against dealing with Saints appears to have had usually an origin, a first cause, dimly political. Sometimes it has been rooted in the suspicion that the Saints do better by their own than by the outsider—which, I daresay, is true. A bloc is a bloc, wherever and whoever. Besides, when you have anything of your own so mighty and mysterious as the Mormon Temple, you must feel a peculiar comradeship with the only other people who are allowed to enter it. The interior of the Temple must, by all accounts, and judging from official photographs, be extremely ugly and not at all impressive. But so long as they keep the public out the public will be impressed, for the Temple is externally a very fine and a very striking building, and it is not in the human heart to gaze upon it without being violently intrigued. The fact that only Mormons in good standing can enter it, and that even they must enter shoeless and by an underground passage (for the Temple has no outer doors) only makes you want to go in all the more.

The present Mormon situation would seem to be about this. The Church has a marvellous organization, a complicated and very efficient hierarchy. All the affairs of the good Mormon are known to his ward bishop, and thus the Church keeps its hold on his practical existence. The



The Mormon Temple
is closed to Gentiles

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Church is a vast, rich, and admirably run business concern, and can of course control the politics of the state of Utah. Its hands are at last off the state University; and in many ways the Church shows itself cannily willing not to isolate itself menacingly. There is some talk at present, among Salt Lake Gentiles, of a revived anti-Mormon party, but it is to be hoped that it will come to nothing. For the fact is, naturally, that the Americanization process is going on all the time. Not only are the Mormon immigrants excellent citizen material, apt to apprehend quickly and easily American ideas; the young American Mormons are American first of all, and subject to the moral and social decisions of the great American group. The elders keep, inevitably, some smack of the peculiar people about them; but they cannot pass it on, for America will have its way with the convert, even more definitely than will the Church. The Mormons are proud of their history, exceedingly proud of the pioneers. They do not show the frequent American disregard of their origins, and that is a good thing. Brigham Young is highly respected as a great state-builder; he has his monument opposite the Temple Block, his monument at the mouth of Emigration Canyon. But they are not going in for the equivalent of canonization: they have torn down Amelia Palace, which

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is a significant fact. The relics of the pioneers are piously kept—furniture, implements, ill-fated handcars, and the like—but rather in the spirit of Old Deerfield, one would say, than in any sectarian fervor. That the Church is a very close corporation, no one, I think, would deny; but they came out of the wilderness when they gave up polygamy. That was the symbolic and fateful struggle. Having bowed once to the law of the land, they will continue to do so. The young missionaries they send out into all the world will bring back converts, yet they will not themselves be unaffected by exploring the planet; and while they are converting the foreigners into Mormons, their own Mormonism becomes more liberal with those very contacts.

“I am not a religious man,” said our Mormon driver, as we wound up Emigration Canyon; “but I always carry this round with me.” He handed over a Maori Testament. He had spent four years in New Zealand, Australia, and the South Seas, and his four years had served him lavishly in lieu of a university. He had mastered Maori; he had also mastered a beautiful English accent and diction; most of all, he had mastered much knowledge of human beings. We followed with our eyes the dizzy trail of the pioneers on that last terrific lap of their trek; saw how here they had had to let their oxcarts down by ropes, how

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there they had doubled on their tracks to circumvent the mountain steepness. "Brigham Young was a great man," said our Mormon friend; "a very big man indeed. Of course"—with a little nuance of disgust—"I don't hold with his views about polygamy; but he surely was a great pioneer." He was, indeed; one of the greatest; and why should any Utahn, Mormon or Gentile, forget it?

Life for the dwellers in Salt Lake City seemed to us outlanders full of promise and delight. In the first place, they have beauty and climate on their side. They have few rigors to bear. "It is cold for two or three months," they say, looking up at the snow on the Wasatches. "Of course, it isn't like your Eastern cold. And it's hot in July and August; but it's a dry heat, and the nights are cool—not like the East." The atrocious extremes that we put up with in a calendar year are a kind of legend in the West. You are often made to feel—though courtesy is unmarred—that they do not quite understand why you consent to endure your existence at home. If you were truly inventive, you could find some excuse for removing yourself to a happier clime. "There was a man," meditated a young Utahn, "who said he didn't have to work: he could starve. Well, I don't have to live in the East: I can starve." Exactly. But

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most of us have not the courage actually to try those conclusions.

Consider for a moment the elements of life in Salt Lake City. Climate and situation, in the first place. Room to build your house (and building is cheap) where you can be in perpetual sight of some of the loveliest mountains in the land. Wide streets and magnificent vistas; the fine State House crowning one of the many hills. The sportiest golf course in the country, with one of the most charming of orange-colored country clubs, beneath the Wasatch Range. The constant vision of the Mormon Temple—in itself no small boon. The fruits of the earth grown for you by Mormon farmers; and irrigation giving you, at small expense, all the flowers and grass and trees that you desire. And not only the Mormon Church to make life interesting, but—think of it—the Mormon converts to make the servant problem easy! It is not in the human heart to be satisfied with monotony, even of perfection; and destiny has thrown in for good measure the uniqueness of the Great Salt Lake and the canyons of the Wasatch Range. Are you hot, or do you want to fish? Then run your car up Big Cottonwood Canyon and stop at Brighton, eight thousand feet up, among the pines. Do you crave a summer resort? Ogden Canyon will serve you. A mere afternoon's



Big Cottonwood Canyon
Near Salt Lake City
Wares
1917

Big Cottonwood Canyon

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drive with a view at the end? Parley's Canyon is just back of the country club, City Creek Canyon just behind the State House. Your sky-line boulevard is hard to match, even in a country where all cities have them. Do you desire a historic thrill? Go up Emigration Canyon, stop at the Pinecrest Inn, and consider the pioneers. Must you shoot big game? You will find it, buffalo and all, on Antelope Island. Does your vulgar heart crave something in the nature of Coney or Asbury Park? Saltair will furnish you forth, beside a sea in which you cannot sink. Must you turn tourist? Well; you are at the "pivotal centre" of the finest scenery in the country, and a short train journey will take you to the Yellowstone or the Colorado Rockies. Bingham, over there in the Oquirrhs, is said to be the biggest copper mine in the world, and you can visit the Inferno at your will. You cannot have the Navy in Salt Lake City, but you can and do have the Army. Camp Douglas is a large post, and khaki is all about. You even own the heavyweight champion of the world—and I noticed that, however deprecatingly civilized folk might speak, they never failed to point out Jack Dempsey's house when you passed it. A very nice house it is, too, and apparently a very decent sort, the champion.

Romance, for us Americans, must lie in the con-

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sciousness of how vast and varied a land is ours. Europe is an old, old story, and we shall not match that legend here. But to some of us, romantically patriotic, a new state of the Union is as exciting as a Balkan country. Centralization has not gone so far that one state is like another. Yet there is a curious, intimate urge (not in the least like that of the tourist in foreign lands) to know them all. To be sure, you must be both romantic and a citizen, to feel that urge. But most of us, after all, are both. A book has been written of late entitled *The Genius of America*. I should scarcely agree with the able and learned author as to the definition of that genius. But that there is such a thing no serious American can deny; and for us Easterners the sense of it becomes most vivid, most quickening, when we have climbed to the high plains and reached, or crossed, the Great Divide. In comparison with the Far Western states—still territories within the memory of this generation—our East seems very old. We cannot easily recapture now the days of our plasticity, when we too, under the hands of the founders of the Republic, were in the making.

Here, in the Far West, one can see the American spirit at work. You see both what has been and what is. Utah is one of the most illuminating of states. "Americanization" comes to mean little

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to us on our crowded Atlantic seaboard. If I may be forgiven the homely metaphor, food must be masticated before it can be assimilated; and we have bitten off more than we can even chew. The Far West has, in the nature of things, had fewer elements to deal with, and assimilation can be spoken of. American institutions, if given a chance, do mean something and do accomplish much. It took courage and it took vision to conquer the great spaces; and courage and vision were both at hand. The genius of America, to some extent baffled and dormant east of the Rocky Mountains, has been steadily, uninterruptedly occupied beyond them. No groups could be more different than the groups who successively trekked westward: gold-seekers, Mormons, engineers, lumberjacks, ranchers, farmers; yet somehow they have collaborated, unconsciously, to make the West. They were crude, but they were brave; and the genius of America (which, I take it, is a genius not for "profound moral idealism" but for liberty) was strong in them. The Mormons trekked west, as the Boers trekked north, in the hope of the utter freedom that comes with isolation. They could not have it—any more than the Indians could have it. Then they turned their hopes to statehood; and it was very long before they might have that. Their early history is full

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of blood and hatred; state after state cast them out, and to their enemies they returned full measure. The Church cannot wholly rehabilitate the Mormon pioneers into mere martyrs. But even this peculiar people had resident within its breast something of the American spirit, an aptness for American ideals. In so far as they attempted to be violently coercive, the genius of America denied them. That your own freedom means the other man's freedom, they have apprehended. Liberty is a searching, a far-reaching, even a subtle ideal. The young Mormons, free of the fanaticism of the founders, are Americans simply. America has somehow conquered the intolerance of the Mormon pioneers, as, if it has any luck, it will conquer the Ku Klux and all other groups determined to compel whom they cannot convince.

It may be that the Mormon Church was responsible, for example, for the recent anti-cigarette law (though such laws have been heard of in states that had not the excuse of a divine revelation against tobacco), as it may be that the Ku Klux Klan was responsible for the law that suppressed the private (which means the parochial) schools in the state of Oregon. But the anti-cigarette law was somehow quashed in Utah; and the anti-Catholic laws in Oregon have been declared invalid by the Supreme Court. The Mormons discovered

that the privilege of statehood meant something: they had to give guarantees. On the whole, the privilege seemed to them worth it. You cannot redeem a desert into fertility, create out of rock and sand a community where men shall have abundant food, shelter, and safety, where children shall grow up to a goodly heritage, physical and intellectual, where property shall be safe and labor have its reward, without, in the process, laying hold on the essentials of American life. Utah is a very hard-working state, and hard work has taught it what is worth working for. Fine schools; good water-supply; comfortable homes; the power to build a beautiful State House and turn back to the State Treasurer a surplus out of the appropriation. (They are really proud of that, and you cannot blame them. In how many Eastern states has it ever happened?)

That some Salt Lake Gentiles are bitter and suspicious, there is no question; but you will usually find that there has been some sort of political disappointment back of their bitterness. Though Gentiles out-number Mormons in Salt Lake City itself, Mormons preponderate greatly in the state at large—yet the Church has recently lost any control of the state University, though there are plenty of Mormon students enrolled in it. They have their own Brigham Young University at Provo;

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and a flourishing L. D. S. business college in Salt Lake. But if the young Mormon wants a real academic education, he goes to the University of Utah or the University of California or some other such institution; and the L. D. S. business college is patronized by Gentiles as well as Saints. The present president of the Mormon Church is said by many people to be a fanatic; but he does not seem to be increasing fanaticism among the Saints. "This generation of Mormons is like anybody else," some native and resident of Salt Lake City will tell you. The next one says, "I have a lot of friends among Mormons—I'm very fond of them, and see a lot of them; but of course they will always hang together politically." One man says, "The young Mormons have broken away, and the Church can't last, except as a business organization." Another person says, "The educated young people are growing more liberal all the time; but the Church isn't liberal, and it is growing in numbers because they make so many converts." I traced the terror of converts in one instance to the immense Mormon success in the Hawaiian Islands. My interlocutor was much surprised to learn that the proselyting is confined to the Kana-kas, who are themselves a dying race. All these people I have quoted are either born or bred Utahns; one is as well informed as another. What

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the good ladies of Salt Lake agree in admitting is that the Mormon flapper—in the contemporary sense of the word—does not exist. “They do look after their young people better than we do,” they sigh. Well, one sees how that is. As a policing system, the Mormon organization works admirably. The little ward churches are scattered about, one every few blocks. Sunday morning services and Sunday school are held there, not in the Tabernacle. The ward bishop, the teachers, the elders look after the tithes, the attendance, the general conduct of the faithful.

The Latter Day Saints—so rigid, so inconceivably narrow, in some ways—have had some saving elasticities. They have always cultivated music assiduously—good music, too. Also—even more important, perhaps, for the young people—they have always, like David, danced before the Lord. Brigham Young built his theatre before he built his Temple, and made his own daughters act, in order to encourage a high opinion of the actor’s profession. Maude Adams, as you know, was born in Salt Lake, and began her career there. Music and dancing and the theatre are a great help in keeping the younger generation occupied and amused. The Tabernacle organ and the Mormon choir are both overrated. The preaching of the apostles is disappointing, and the Tabernacle serv-

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ice unimpressive. The congregation is less reverent than any congregations I am used to. They giggle more, and talk more, and yawn more, and nurse the babies more openly. Their religious awe is probably reserved for the ceremonies in the Temple. What is not unimpressive is the crowds that file daily into the Tabernacle at noon to hear the organ recital. All the tourists are there, naturally; but Gentiles are outnumbered by Mormons. The Mormon farmer and his family who have come into town for the day; up-state Saints who have business in Salt Lake, or are taking a holiday; faithful residents, overweeningly proud of organ and organist—they pack the galleries behind locked doors, and listen to Bach and Mozart and Wagner. Every programme includes “classical” music; it includes also variations on some simple air known to the most countrified; it always begins with the Star-Spangled Banner, and always includes the “favorite Mormon hymn,” the words of which are printed on the back of every programme. The medley is very characteristic of Church policy in general. They will educate their people with classical music; they will call attention to their patriotism; they will appeal to the humble with “Silver Threads among the Gold”; but they will never omit the favorite Mormon hymn—writ-

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ten by Eliza R. Snow Smith in 1848. So you pass from a Bach fugue to the strains of

“In the heavens are parents single?

No: the thought makes reason stare!

Truth is reason; truth eternal

Tells me I've a mother there.”

Use of the Mormon Tabernacle is freely granted for political and other public meetings—with the sole condition that, whatever the occasion, the Mormon choir must be present and must sing.

What does the Church do with its money? That is a question one inevitably asks, sooner or later. There is no priestly order to support; all are laymen. The missionaries pay their own expenses—in the case of the very young men, the parents pay them—except for the return ticket, when missioning is done. If you are sent to China for three years, you buy your own transportation, and you support yourself while there. The Church pays only for your passage home. Where do the tithes go? Well, there is the Temple Block to be kept up; the music, too, is expensive. And there are new Temples to erect. Temples cost a great deal. The Temple in Salt Lake cost less than some others, though it took forty years to build. (But all labor on it was freely given!) There are four in Utah; a new one in Alberta; one in Laie, Ha-

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wail; one building at present in Arizona. They intend to build the finest of all in Independence, Missouri, because Joseph Smith declared it to be Zion. That is a necessary if expensive gesture. Temples, nowadays, run well over a million; and Temples they must have within reach of any considerable group of Saints. All the really important things—the “ordinances,” etc.—are carried on in the Temple: baptism, “sealing,” marrying (I am told a marriage ceremony takes all day), and the like. The Church has recently had to buy the inn at the head of Emigration Canyon, and operate it at a loss, because the Canyon in summer is inhabited by Saints who resented having a road-house in their vicinity. The Church must have to do a good deal of private financing of its agricultural members in hard times. The real problem for the Church is, perhaps, the tithing problem. They could afford to let the young people liberalize themselves doctrinally; but with too much liberalism goes the refusal to pay tithes. The Church is rich—though just after the war it nearly went on the rocks—but it will not continue to be rich unless the tithes pour in. The genius of America, which is absorbing and influencing the intelligent young Saints, is not a genius that impels to the paying of tithes to any church, or to the disclosing of a man’s private affairs to his ward

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bishop. The early Mormons themselves drew the line at the kind of communism which Joseph Smith endeavored to impose on them in 1831. "Owing to persecution, and to the selfishness, pride, and disobedience of men, it was not permanently founded. . . . The lesser law of tithing was given them in lieu thereof, in the year 1838. This law requires the person to pay, first, his surplus property to the Bishop, and after that, one tenth of his annual income."

Are the present-day Mormons going to keep the lesser law? Most Gentiles incline to doubt very much that their prominent Mormon friends abide by it completely. That there is trouble about the tithes is unquestionable. Certainly the "surplus" does not always go to the bishop. The Prophet's purpose was explicitly that no man should be richer than another, and that any property above the necessary minimum for supporting life should be given up. It is obvious to the most casual investigator that, though there may be a high subsistence-level, some Mormons are richer than others, and spend their "surplus" on themselves, precisely as Gentiles do. The future of tithing is very dubious. The Presidency, of latter decades, has not gone in much for divine revelation, though belief in revelation, prophecy, and the gift of tongues remains one of the prominent

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articles of the Mormon faith. When the great crisis of 1890 was upon the Church, President Wilford Woodruff had no new revelation about polygamy; he merely made a solemn declaration that the Church had ceased to teach or practise it. Polygamy passed long since; endowment robes and abstinence from tobacco and coffee are going; Mormons marry Gentiles, outside the Temple. But the real crash will come when the tithes stop. And Americans do not give up their surplus, or pay tithes, unless they want to. If the Irish-American has for the most part escaped the domination of his clergy, the Mormon-American is not going to stop forever under the tutelage of his ward bishop.

Salt Lake City is old, as non-Spanish towns go, in our Far West. But mere comparative age could not have given it its superior dignity and beauty. The trees have had time to grow—but it was Brigham Young who had them planted immediately. He laid out the city, in the beginning, on the grand scale. He fetched water down from the canyons. As soon as he could afford to build for permanence, he built well. The Tiffany Company has contributed to the interior of the Temple a large stained-glass window representing the Father and Son appearing to Joseph Smith. Most of us will never see Tiffany's conception of that

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interesting event, but we can see the exterior of the Temple, which had no famous architect. Under Brigham Young's direction, they dragged the great stones down in ox carts from Little Cottonwood Canyon; twenty years later, they had a railroad to help them carry the granite; twenty years after that, the Temple was finished, and it remains the romantic and historic heart of the city. From below, the gilded statue of Moroni is merely the topmost pinnacle of the great pile. But if you wish to come under Moroni's spell, dine at sunset on the roof of your hotel, opposite the Temple Block. Each moment is lovelier than the last. Your eye rakes three points of the compass; from the Wasatches behind at your left, round to the Oquirrh and the Great Salt Lake before you, to rest on Moroni rising at your right hand, his trumpet pointing to stars you cannot see. It is Moroni at nightfall who would convert me to Mormonism, if I were to be converted. He seems to have very little to do with Mormon his father, or Joseph Smith his prophet, or the hill Cumorah, or the golden plates; but a great deal to do with human aspiration. Out of a forbidding faith and a lurid history has come the figure of the angel at sunset.

One hopes that there will always be enough tithes, or enough profit on beetroot sugar, to keep Moroni gilded and secure in his commanding posi-

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tion. If they took all the tourists to dine on the roof of the Hotel Utah, reservations on the Yellowstone Special would be easy to get. I know that if to me were entrusted the task of "selling" Salt Lake City, I should not talk about pivotal centres and radii. I should merely say, in the words of Brigham Young, "This is the place."

Chapter Three

OUR NORTHWESTERN STATES

A CERTAIN real-estate agent of Seattle has placed some very engaging signs on the outskirts of the city. They read thus:

It's a Great Life.
It's a Beautiful Country.
What's Your Hurry?

At the city limits a Janus-boarding appears: as you pass the municipal boundaries, coming in, you read "Welcome to Seattle," or "Seattle Welcomes You"; as you pass them, leaving the city, you are asked in gigantic capitals, "Why Leave the Charmed Land?" In the Middle West the traveller by train is often startled by an arch of electric bulbs over the Main Street which declares "This is a City of Homes." In the Far West they make a different plea, advertising not themselves but their natural advantages. One small town in Oregon—a town you never heard of, at which no express trains stops—has copied the arch but not

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the sentiment. It states, in a touching ellipsis, "It's the Climate."

Town rivalry was always one of the most entertaining features of Far Western development. It was not the states that were calling each other names and pushing each other out of the way, for in earlier days states were mere geographical and political entities. It was the rare cities that were self-conscious, ambitious, passionate. No man stopped to think, fifteen or twenty years ago, that he was a resident of Washington: his whole mind was occupied with being a citizen of Seattle or of Tacoma. Whichever he happened to be, he lay awake nights worrying about the other place. The Northwest of 1925 is very different from the Northwest of the Lewis and Clark Exposition year, when I first saw it. On Tacoma Day at the 1905 Exposition the good Tacomans covered the grounds, like confetti-laden wedding guests, with little handbills that said, "Watch Tacoma Grow." Seattle was greatly troubled until an anxious session of citizens created a new race of handbills reading "Seattle Grows Without Watching." They even quarrelled about their respective totem poles. An honest resident of Tacoma—a minister of the Gospel—confessed to me in 1905 that the Tacoma totem pole was a modern copy; but he went on to say, "Anyhow, we came by it honestly. The Seat-

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the business men went to Alaska and *stole* theirs." The two towns were each other's dearest foes, and thought up vituperative epithets whenever the mad rush of boom conditions gave them time. Both felt they could ignore Portland, which was supposed to be a charming and cultivated old lady, too delicate and formal to cope with a bustling and traditionless present. So quickly is history made in our marvellous West.

In time, luck settles all such rivalries. One place or the other forges far ahead. For many years Seattle has been able from her safe vantage-point to acknowledge Tacoma in peace. The time when settlers from the East gambled on one or the other is long past. Seattle is the metropolis. Tacoma could not possibly catch up now. The only rival Seattle fears at all is in another state—that genteel, ineffectual, outdated Portland, which (like the lady in *Black Oxen*) has become miraculously rejuvenated, and now, as a contemporary, has very pointed things to say about the navigability of the Columbia River and the disastrous fogs of Puget Sound. The modern rivalry, however, is somewhat differently carried on: vituperation has gone out of fashion. Seattle has grown older as Portland has grown younger; both are verging on middle age, and Tom Sawyer manners are not the thing. Chambers of Commerce proceed by

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indirection and innuendo. If yours is the best harbor on the north Pacific coast, it stands to reason that any other harbor can be only second-best. But we mention no names.

The slow processes of history, with whole races for protagonists, tend to make man seem a very little thing. Minor episodes are lost in the immense main stream, and nowadays the canvas on which publicists paint is so complicated that one is discouraged in the attempt to grasp mere facts. If you cannot discuss France in the Ruhr without discussing the French African Empire, or the future of Great Britain without discussing Pan-Islamism, or any strictly European question without putting your mind on Moscow, Angora, and the terrible Balkans—what wonder that the eyes of some of us cling to our own country and to contemplation of our native conditions? The great advantage of our own West to any citizen whose interests are not confined to mere gossip, is that in the West the scale is more comprehensible. In twenty years a whole new stage of civilization is reached: you can put your finger on the differences; you can see America at work. The whole process has been speeded up; and the population is not yet distressingly vast or bewilderingly various. The composition is simpler without being small. Who now remembers when Ohio, Illinois,



Seattle is the metropolis
of the Northwest

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Indiana were vague western goals of the settler? Which one of us was even brought up to believe in a Great American Desert that stretched from the Missouri to the Rockies? What metropolis have you or I watched from its scanty beginnings? Rome was not built in a day; but the American cities of the Far West have been, very nearly. "The largest city of its age in the world," Seattle calls itself, in a current Eastern magazine (advertising not some patented food but bonds). Moreover, these towns were built by Americans, by people who for the most part had been bred in a settled America: an America which had already for nearly a hundred years been a nation, and had had its chance to develop an American type. They did not have to invent or to learn "Americanism" in their raw, new country. Their fathers and grandfathers had done that for them. But they were free to create the conditions in which they considered it could best thrive. The Far West is a beautiful laboratory for the citizen who is truly interested in American tendencies and characteristics.

When I first saw Seattle, it was a terrifying town, seeming very brash and brazen to the traveller. The talk of citizens had not simmered down into complacency; it was loud and aggressive. You had the positive sense of seeing the city grow

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before your eyes. It was the honest conviction of the Easterner that when he walked three blocks to a certain destination, the town proceeded to expand so quickly that he had four blocks to walk home. Few hills had been washed down then; you reached the Washington Hotel, which sat on a sort of mesa of its own, by a little private funicular. The wooden shack and the ambitious business block were cheek by jowl; and the Siwashes squatted on the curbstone of First Avenue in unchallenged supremacy of filth. I never saw Seattle in the days when the whole world was outfitting there for the Klondike. I am told by people who lived there in those wilder times that corpses were numerous and unidentified along the shores of Puget Sound.

Even a few years later Seattle was a depressing place to the quiet Easterner. They asked you to take so much for granted: that their rough wooden edifices were going to change overnight, into lovely fabrics of brick and stone; that they were going to corner not only all the business west of Chicago but all the civilization of the whole country; that they were going to be as big as New York in a few minutes, and that they were already a great deal better. The rawness was going to vanish in another week; and everyone was going to be rich by the week after. They even said that

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Seattle was the best place from which to see Mount Rainier. And meanwhile they slanged everything on the planet that was not Seattle. Seattle was at that time a principal abode of the objectionable human thing known as the "live wire." Everybody was a live wire, and a sojourn in the city was a series of distressing shocks. Even then Tacoma, in spite of the verbal quarrel, was accepting its doom. They admitted, in private conversation, that it was "a city of homes"; and when citizens select that label, it means that they have practically renounced commercial supremacies. Tacoma's last kick in the struggle was the protest that Mount Rainier was, properly, Mount Tacoma. Yet Rainier it still seems to be, for most people.

Life and luck since that day have wrought upon Seattle and greatly changed her countenance—thinkably, too, her heart. They are not going to be rich next week; their municipal enterprises are going to be elaborated when they have money enough; they actually apologize for some of the things they have not done. They admit hard times; and they "talk poor." They have settled down to facing facts and to realizing that time and chance happeneth to us all. Not one jot of local patriotism have they lost, thank heaven; but they confess that the scale of things in New York and Chicago is quite beyond them, for the present.

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Yes, they will wash down that hill when they get round to it; just now they haven't the money to spare. They are a little tired of booms, for they have lived through more than one post-boom period. They have tasted disillusion, and know what it is to have a subnormal temperature.

In other words, their experience is beginning to square with the experience common to the race. If you cannot see Mount Rainier, they do not say it is because your eyes are queer: they admit that the mountain is not visible. Alaska is still immensely important to them economically, as Seattle is the logical and recognized *entrepôt* for Alaskan trade; but Alaska is Alaska nowadays—not Eldorado or Aladdin's lamp. Fish and furs come out of Alaska; but nuggets are less common. Seattle lost a sizable portion of its population just after the War, when the war boom collapsed, and they are busy trying to get back to pre-war conditions. Population in the West shifts so quickly that the last census is of no use to-day; but I believe Portland at the moment claims to overtop Seattle in numbers. "No war boom, no post-war depression" seems to be the simple rule in these matters.

Lumber, shipping, fish, fruits, and vegetables seem to constitute the basic economic activities of these Northwestern communities that have clear

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access to the Pacific Ocean. There is an "inland empire" over beyond the Cascades, with Spokane for unofficial capital; there are valleys dotted over Washington and Oregon which raise, severally, the perfect apple, the perfect lettuce head, the perfect cherry. Mines and wheat fields distinguish certain regions. The Northwest scorns California (I fancy, with reason) as a producer of non-citrus fruits. The lumber is indisputably theirs; and there cannot be any more millions of herring gathered at any one place on the earth's surface than are packed and piled for shipment on the Seattle docks.

Yet there are still too many useless ships lying in Lake Union. They are "coming back" with good cheer and courage, but the aroma of post-war depression still clouds the air. They boast—everyone in the West boasts except San Francisco, which is too proud to boast—but they boast of what they already have, not of what they are going to have next week. They mention no goods that they cannot deliver. They can deliver beauty; they can deliver climate; they can deliver a magnificent water front; they can deliver certain commodities of the mineral and vegetable (especially the vegetable) worlds. On these provable premises they rest their case.

If Seattle has changed, Portland has changed

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as well. In former years one was more or less deafened by Seattle into thinking that Portland was mute, except for whispered reference to her genteel traditions. But the American temper is notoriously impatient of desuetude: it is hardly even sentimental about it. We know, in the East, what happens when decay is allowed to set in. The foreigners inherit; Quality Street becomes a slum; and in most cases no one worries. Good citizens are busy creating new "subdivisions" elsewhere. Except for something actually historic, taken over by a patriotic association, the law of survival is pretty brutally accepted. If a family, or a class, or a community dies out or becomes impotent, it is not up to anyone else to arrest its downfall. Our gift is still for construction, not yet for selection and preservation. We have something to learn from the practical British on that score. All this is natural enough; and a nation that made its history largely in log cabins cannot be expected to respect those temporary headquarters of authority. Linked with a beloved name, any edifice can arouse our easy, generous sentiment. But without the personal appeal, sentiment is not aroused. "Progress" takes its place. Antiquarians may murmur in their corners, but the stream of American life engulfs them. The West, which has fewer heirlooms than the East, has had less natural piety.



There are valleys which
raise the perfect apple

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The West was created by men who had neither time nor opportunity to build for permanence. They built for protection from the inclemency of storm and savages. They were always moving on to accomplish a little more of the tremendous task before them, which was the reclaiming of a whole continent from one ocean verge to the other. They were sentimental about the future, if about anything; about what their sons and grandsons would do. Pioneers, every one. It was for the "effete East" to cherish its Georgian doorways and to live, while it could, in the kind of house it no longer knew how to build.

But after the pioneer comes the next generation; and the next generation, you will have noticed, is always snobbish in one way or another. If its immediate past is attractive, then it is proud of it; if its immediate past is not attractive, it tends to forget it. It is an odd fact of human psychology that we centre our pride on either past or future: on the thing which has been or the thing which shall be—unconscious acknowledgment, no doubt, of the fact that things as they are usually are pretty bad. Roughly speaking, if your heritage is pleasant, you glorify it. If no one could call it pleasant, you look to the future for beauty.

Half a generation ago, Portland had reached the point of having dignity and a measure of civi-

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zation behind it. It was in danger, one felt, of being snobbish about the past, in good Atlantic-seaboard fashion. No one who knows Portland will forget the old houses in the centre of the city, each occupying, with its lawn and trees, a whole city block. Ugly houses of the wrong period, suggestive of bad woodwork and tin bathtubs—but suggestive, too, of well-filled libraries and pleasant speech and the essential decencies of life. They are still there, though immediately doomed, for the big buildings are crowding them close. The next time, alas! one will not see them. Portland was the East set down in the West: a town that, as soon as the strain was over (and Portland is of course much older than its rivals in the state of Washington) had reproduced its origins with fidelity and respect. Portland people, as I remember them in my own youth, were like Eastern people and not ashamed of it. In fact, they preferred it that way. No hotel that I have ever met with in the West is so civilized as the old Hotel Portland used to be, years ago; and in the newest Coast caravanserais to-day one can still sigh for it. Yes, Portland was “different,” half a generation ago: not cosmopolitan like San Francisco; not delirious with ambition like the Washington towns; yet too Western, it would now appear, to acquiesce in decay. It, too—though one did not

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suspect it then—had an eye to the future; and though it did despise rawness, it did not despise success. It sat embowered in roses and took thought for its destiny, while one was pitying it for being a sort of spiritual Salem—without the shoes.

So Portland to-day is steadily growing—they insist that they overtop Seattle in numbers—and is building a huge bridge over the Columbia River which will enable it to tap a rich section of southern Washington. It is still the only town in the country that plants great rosebushes between the sidewalk and the street—hedges of Caroline Testout between the pedestrian and the motor car; but its talk is less of roses than of the miraculous things that happen to barnacles when a ship comes up the Columbia from the Pacific to the Willamette River in the heart of Portland. When Seattle remarks that Lake Union also cleans off barnacles, Portland merely states that there are no fogs in the Columbia River between the Pacific and the Willamette. The *Portland Oregonian* does not always write an editorial about a collision in Puget Sound; sometimes it merely puts it in decoratively, without comment, as stop-press news. To the *Oregonian* there is no reply in kind; for it is the only first-class newspaper on the Pacific coast.

What one is made to realize each time afresh—

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each time increasingly—as one crosses the Great Divide and rests for a while in the loveliest portions of our great country, is that city rivalries must always perish but that sectionalism must always—in spite of Capitol Hill—intensify. Gradually the community will stretch out, spiritually speaking, to its extremest possible bounds. Only Rotarians can pretend that a city is a moral organism. The single town is, in modern times, too circumscribed, too inadequate, to be a symbol or a synonym for a clan. If the differences between city and city surely shrink along with their hatreds, no less surely do sections assert a personality of their own. The citizen who knows every capital of Europe but has never been west of the Missouri River (so long the historic frontier) has missed a large number of important and interesting facts about the difficult business of being an American. One is tempted to say that if he knows only the submerged East, he is a long way off knowing how to vote intelligently. If he is still abiding by the old categories of East and West, North and South, he is socially behind the times. The Missouri River is no frontier at all, nowadays, and Mason and Dixon's Line is, to say the least, antiquated. The West is not everything west of Chicago—though I know educated people who think it is. There are still distinctions to be drawn between

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West and East, but he would be rash indeed who should affect to find much similarity in the points of view of Washington and New Mexico. They are more like each other than either is like Iowa or Kansas; but that is about all one can say. Oregon Trail did not differ so much from Santa Fé Trail—and those trails differed socially as much as they did physically—as Northwest differs now from Southwest. California has always been, and still is, a case apart. The Northwest knows itself and its boundaries; it is conscious of itself as an entity. Roughly speaking, it stretches eastward to the Dakotas; southward, it stops short of California, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. It admits Idaho and Montana, as you see; but the Dakotas are not included, in spite of their northerliness and their westerliness. They are too far east of the Rocky Mountains. Once well east of the Rocky Mountains, you do not “belong.” Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana are the Northwest: Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada, are “Far West,” but they are not Northwest. California is, as we said, California—and alone.

The reasons why Portland is “getting the drop” on Seattle at the moment are interesting, as one learns them from loyal Washingtonians. The post-war depression which has for various reasons hit Seattle harder than Portland, is always mentioned

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first. As far as the future of shipping goes, the balance would certainly seem to be in Seattle's favor. In spite of the things they have done to the Columbia River bar, so long a nuisance and a menace to navigation, Portland is a hundred miles from the open ocean and has not the magnificent harbor facilities of her northern neighbor. Portland, to be sure, has a railway approach at water-grade level; it can tap and be tapped by a big and important territory without crossing the Cascades. But the most interesting reasons that are given to you are social and human. Portland has, I am told (and remember that this is Washington speaking, not Oregon) a more intelligent class of prominent citizens. Many of them have inherited their wealth on the spot; they are willing to put their keen and homogeneous minds on the future of Portland; they can and do work harmoniously together, with a common ideal. The team-work of sympathetic and intelligent men is always a mighty phenomenon; and apparently Portland has, at the moment, a Chamber of Commerce more enlightened than the ruck.

Besides this, Seattle has been at times a radical hotbed; one of the worst I. W. W. nests in the country, as we all know. Perhaps Portland has profited, humanly speaking, by not being so emphatically a seaport and an *entrepôt* as it would

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like to think itself. At all events, though it has had labor difficulties, its troubles have not been dyed so bright a scarlet as those of Seattle. Even the detrimentals of Portland are, comparatively speaking, touched by conservatism. They do not run to Sunday schools for the children, conducted in the interests of explicit blasphemy—hymn books and all. The Washington I. W. W.'s go in for an actual though non-ritualistic equivalent of the Black Mass—or did, a few years ago. Oregon's fight seems to be, at present, rather against ignorance than against malevolence: Ku Klux rather than I. W. W. The men from the Southern mountains who fill the Oregon lumber camps are uneducated, narrow, and peculiarly susceptible to Ku Klux propaganda; but no one can say that they are not original, if myopic, Americans. The Ku Klux itself is American enough, heaven knows; though America in one of its least admirable manifestations, one of its aspects that faces most emphatically away from the central American ideal. No one, certainly, can say that it is the Russian Jew or the Fenian Irishman or even the muddle-headed reformer who has foisted the Ku Klux upon us. All things change politically, with surprising speed; and history overtakes even the readiest writer. People who write political articles for serious reviews are always discovering that they

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made their bargain with the Sibyl a little too late. Let me only say about Oregon and the Ku Klux that Ku Klux influence did put over, in 1922, a law forbidding the existence anywhere in the state of a private—which of course meant a parochial—school. But this anti-Catholic, this fundamentally anti-American move has now been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The lumber camps have not been allowed, in the event, to legislate for Oregon according to their inherited prejudices.

One gathers a great deal of misinformation as one travels about any country of which one speaks the language. Perhaps the answer to Oregon legislation about schools is the Ku Klux maggot in the heart of the lumberjack. But I was constantly haunted by the confidences made to me by a very nice young waitress at my Reno hostelry. She had come to Nevada after a year of waiting at the tables of Portland hotels. "You can't help hearing a lot that people don't think you're hearing," she said; "and I used to hear the men talk when they were lunching together. They may say it's Ku Klux, but it isn't all Ku Klux. It's the Protestant ministers. They've got a lot of power, and they're just determined to put the Catholics out of business. My, but they're a narrow-minded set of men! I couldn't tell you the things I've

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heard them say." That particiular young woman may well have been a Catholic herself, and prejudiced; certainly she was misinformed about there being enforced at present, in Oregon, any state law against the use of finger bowls. But have we not been told, recently, appalling things about the success of the Ku Klux in non-Southern Indiana? Is it not apparently stretching up into the communities of the Old Northwest? Have not a lot of Protestant ministers declared themselves of late in peculiarly objectionable ways? And does anyone pretend that the Western state (Oklahoma, I think) which, I am told, has prescribed the length of bed sheets *in its constitution*, did so under the influence of the Ku Klux Klan?

We are greatly given to vagaries; almost any minority can put over its own panacea; and for a courageous people we are very easily stampeded. If the West is more given to vagaries of a political and social sort than the East, that is after all natural. Youth has illusions, and is mentally adventurous; and it is not over-troubled with experience. The whole Far Western adventure was the headiest thing in our history; never was there such a chance, in a land of space and luck and gold, to make the world anew. What wonder that, facing those limitless horizons, men have thought themselves like gods, creating new laws for new condi-

tions; both privileged and empowered to mould their cities and their states to their hearts' desire? Laughable, from the point of view of older statesmen, some of their counsels of perfection have indeed been; and they have been misled into laying legislative stress on non-essentials—like the length of bed sheets and the form in which tobacco shall be used by citizens. They are still feeling their oats, still thinking that a new guess is likely to be wisdom. But generally speaking, in the Far West the instinct for liberty has been fairly untrammelled. Personally I refuse to worry too much about the Ku Klux west of the Rocky Mountains, even though race prejudice exists there.

Commerce, economic conditions, financial fortune, natural resources: these are a great part of any human tale. It is a platitude that every war is fought for reasons fundamentally economic, and that nations arm themselves for "markets," not for ideas. But the romantic citizen cannot, if he would, confine himself to statistics, or hold converse only with Chambers of Commerce. For the average person it is, in the end, the human and social aspect of a new and strange community that counts most. The struggle for existence may shape and condition our lives; but what sort of existence are people struggling *for*? That is the ultimate question. You listen, fascinated, to tales

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of stupendous, unharnessed water power up where the Northwest draws near to the Canadian line; and it is probably true that no man knows even yet what the soil of the Olympic peninsula may hold—that there is room still between the Rockies and the Pacific for discoveries and miracles.

Often and often you hear the magical phrases on men's lips: "No one knows . . . untouched country . . . untapped, unexplored even." We have forgotten in the East what it means to have a mystery, an opportunity, a dream only a stone's throw away. Daniel Boone and his companions are very far behind us. Land is priced for advantages of situation only, at so much a front foot—not because you may find gold or oil on Broadway. The sense of infinite possibilities still haunts the Western mind. I believe that is one reason why they are happier than we are: happier as individuals, as men, as women, as children. Romance is hard to come by for the average citizen on the Atlantic seaboard; and there can be no question that to the normal male there is more fun in discovering a fortune than in cutting coupons. Mystery and opportunity are one reason for the greater happiness that no Easterner can fail ruefully to register. Another, no doubt, is suggested by the little Oregon town: "It's the Climate." Anyhow,

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the phenomenon is there; and we made it our business to divine, if possible, the origin.

Self-analysis is no part of criticism, in spite of the modern introspective taint. Yet that is the method by which one's criticism of social conditions and atmospheres must needs proceed. Sooner or later—I cannot name the exact place or time—it was borne in on me during these latest Western wanderings that I would much rather live in the Far West than in the East. Life there would come much nearer suiting the totality of my being. I found my friends—both my old friends transplanted thither and my newer friends who were bred there—getting much more out of life than my like-minded friends at home. Mr. Arnold Bennett, I believe, once wrote a book called *How to Live on Twenty-Four Hours a Day*. I have never read it, but the title used to haunt me all the way between Salt Lake and Seattle, between Portland and San Diego. Most people I know at home seem to have difficulty in living on twenty-four hours a day; they do not get a balanced ration out of it. The essentials (let us not carry on the dietetic metaphor) seem to be more easily found, in any day, by my Western acquaintance. What is it that they get; how do they get it; and what do they have to forego?

They get a good climate, in the first place—an

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atmosphere in which they can carry on the necessary business of life with the minimum of effort. On the Atlantic seaboard a large part of our nervous energy is expended in resisting climatic conditions. A terrific strain, out there, is removed at the outset. A very important, perhaps the most important factor, this is. They have also natural beauty on a vast and varied scale. We have, of course, no landscape to compare with theirs; and what we make tedious journeys at large expense to achieve for a summer season, is bettered by what the average Far Westerner can see out of his own kitchen window.

It is also a curious fact that supply has created demand: the Westerner—no more sensitive or æsthetic, originally, than you or I—must have beauty of landscape. He feeds on scenery; it enters into his daily life, and he is willing to pay more for the house lot that has a view. Accessibility and convenience, you end by noticing, command a lesser price than beauty of situation. I am not speaking of resorts, hotels, or large estates: I mean the average man's home in the average town. He seems (relatively speaking) not to care a hang where he lives or how far it is from his work or what sort of house it is, so long as he commands a view. The view is his entertainment—

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his Broadway show and his Metropolitan Museum.

Civilized Westerners (apart from Californians) are a modest lot as regards their differences from the East. They tend to deprecate their lack of "advantages"—picture galleries, famous orchestras, good opera, new plays, great libraries. "But on the other hand," I countered once, "you have natural beauty, which we haven't in the same sense; and you care a lot more about it than we do. It means more in your life." "Yes," said my interlocutor, "I think that is true. We *do* care more about it. But then we have to; we haven't got the other things that you have."

The living organism has a genius not only for adventuring but for adapting itself to what it finds at the end of its adventure. Since the dim Devonian days when life made the great decision to be amphibious, we have gone on wanting something different, and proceeding, when we got something different, to develop a taste and an aptitude for it. By whatever evolution or mutation, the Far West has developed a race that cares passionately for the beauty with which it is lavishly provided. To be sure, no season cuts them off from it; they can enjoy Nature the whole year round; but—and this is the moral side of it—



Scenery is on a
Brobdingnagian scale

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they are not bored by it merely because it is so accessible.

Looking out of your window at a snow-topped mountain is what one would call, perhaps, a simple pleasure. What one comes to feel is that the Westerner takes everything more simply than we—both his sorrows and his joys. He seems to the outlander to have decided very cannily what is most worth while in life, and to put his attention on getting that—not worrying too much about the rest. Both, that is, as a citizen and as an individual. The striking thing is that his choices are on the whole not crude, but extremely civilized ones. He has no intention of being “Nature’s nobleman” and letting it go at that. He is not going to buck the inevitable; but neither is he going to be downed by difficulties. Social life is of necessity simpler in the Far West than in the East—even since the War—because (except, perhaps, in Salt Lake City) it is much harder to get servants. Even people who are well off, I take it, are lucky if they get a maid-of-all-work. Most of the houses are smaller and simpler than houses that would go with corresponding incomes in the East. When you can and do live out of doors so much of the time, the size of your house is less important. It is easier—a great deal easier—to give a dinner party at your club than it is to give it at home without a

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regular staff of servants; and your country club is open for business from January to December, inclusive. Everybody has a car; and distances in a good climate do not matter. People are not so restricted there to their own hearthsides; they are always willing to meet their friends at the heart of the landscape. The four walls of home are shoved out to include lakes and valleys and the shores of ocean. I do not know how else to express that genial recognition of Nature as being part of your own interior decoration, neither an alien *milieu* nor a formal spectacle. Nor do you go in danger of Coney Island crowds. In spite of the tourists, there is room enough for everybody, and you can corner a beauty spot for a day with no trouble. One man who had lived in Seattle for some thirty years told me that he could still find new valleys, new mountain-lakes, within striking distance of his own house—if he had a free day to wander out in his car. I do not know where you live, dear reader; but if you live in my part of the country, I should be willing to wager that in thirty years you have pretty well exhausted your easily accessible landscape.

Out of swimming, riding, climbing, camping they get more fun, I believe, than we do because they take them as the natural pastime of any day. It is easy to take to the woods on impulse when

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the woods are all about you; and neither extreme of elaborate preparation or of over-primitive conditions is in such case necessary. Food does not need to be served on Dresden china to be palatable; yet I believe the Far Western scorn of the folk who pig their way in Fords across the country, and wash themselves and their dishes once a week in a community camp, is even deeper than ours—perhaps because the spectacle is so constantly with them. The essentials of civilized life—I don't say the trimmings—are cheaper, on the whole, with them than with us. Good food is cheaper; land is cheaper; building is cheaper; public utilities, like water and electric light, are not so high. Motor cars (the f. o. b. Detroit kind) cost more "west of the Rocky Mountains"; but for some reason known only to the blood kin of profiteers, clothes—women's clothes—are less dear on the Pacific than on the Atlantic coast. It is twice as far from Paris to San Francisco as it is from Paris to New York, so the problem of transportation would work against them. Perhaps it is a question of rents. Perhaps no one in the Far West is out to make money at such a ridiculous rate as in the East.

When I say that good food is cheaper, I should perhaps except the meat that comes from Chicago and Kansas City. I fancy the product of the great

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packing houses is quite as dear with them as with us. But if you really wished to make any Eastern housewife unhappy, you would only have to turn her loose in the municipal market of Seattle. I have a weakness for markets, and from Paris to Washington, D.C., I have been known to haunt them for mere pleasure. Never anywhere has my mouth so watered or my spirit so cried out on the inequalities of life as in the Seattle city market. Only the stern fact that food is perishable kept me from outrageous purchase; for the fish, the fruits, the game, the vegetables, the cheese, the butter, have an ambrosial look and a utopian price. Soberly speaking, it is a shock to see the perfect lettuce head for eight cents; the big box of raspberries for ten, the bunch of celery for five; the more of a shock that these products of the soil are glistening clean. You do not pay for dirt in the Seattle market; and even your string beans sit waiting for you (incredibly cheap) in little orderly rows, like a model bean-school. The Dungeness crab looks almost civilized—and a crustacean can go no farther. There is all poetry in a market basket in Seattle; and what is more, the lean purse can fill it.

If anyone is tempted to think that such markets are not important in the sum of civilization, I beg leave to differ from him. To insist that food of

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the finest quality shall be within the financial reach of every citizen—that eye and palate and purse shall all be subtly satisfied—is to lay down a very fundamental law of intelligent living. We have been praising the French nation a long time for culinary æsthetics; affecting to find in French sauces, even in the French *pot-au-feu*, a certain moral balance and virtue. But to praise them we have lingered in restaurants: we have not gone back to the kitchens and the markets and farms. Certainly we have never ventured, in France, to ask for pure milk. I fancy there is even more social virtue in the perfect producing, perfect exhibiting, and honest selling of foodstuffs than in any sauce whatsoever. It means a different genius for living; but perhaps a more far-reaching one.

Municipal pride could hardly be lacking in a land where cities are so self-conscious. These towns have had the luck to grow up late, after the thing called civic consciousness became fashionable. They have not been sinless; and their water fronts have not been well managed, though Seattle is trying to rectify some mistakes. But they all have skyline boulevards—all of them; and a view is—well, a view is sacred to the Far Westerner, and he will not permit the uneducated newcomer to spoil even his own view if he can help it. They look to the future, one comes to perceive, with

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more sense and more solidarity than we do. They are going to have health and beauty for their children—for all their children. Rotarians, Kiwanis, Lions—they spend their energies, you will find, more often on children's hospitals and children's clinics than on any other one object.

As for the schools—but there is only one word to say about the schools. I have never known an honest Easterner who did not blush when he contemplated the Western schools and remembered his own. If there is only one fine building in the tiny Far Western town, that building is the school. In the cities they are palaces. Nor is it all bricks and mortar: they pay their teachers better than we do. In the West they still keep the earlier American sense of the value, the sanctity of the public school. It must fitly perform a sacred task; it must be the proper nursery of future citizens. In the East we have largely lost that sense—lost it, no doubt, perforce, since the average Eastern public school is becoming a place where the immigrant learns English from a teacher who was born of foreign parents. Here, we have let public-school education come to a sorry pass; paying such low salaries (outside the largest cities) that the people who have fitted themselves to teach cannot afford to; and more or less supinely accepting the fact that an American child of civilized parentage

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can only unlearn his civilization in the classroom. It is to my mind a misfortune when an American child cannot get a large part of his pre-college education both safely and adequately in the public schools. Our children who have been restricted wholly to private schools have lost something which, as prospective citizens, they both needed and had a right to. If anything is to be called "un-American," it is the carelessness which we have displayed, within a generation, in this regard. The decline of American school standards is one of the saddest things that have happened to us as we have thundered along our "progressive" way; and it is not pleasant to see the United States slipping down the list of averages every year, with all sorts of little countries getting ahead of us in the matter of literacy.

This attitude to the public schools is one of the social conceptions in the Far West that induce serious reflection; one of the facts which make one wonder reluctantly if, in so far as we keep American ideals at all, we shall not have to go west of the Rockies to learn how. Our best American tradition combined an enforced simplicity with a keen sense of essential values. Our contribution to social history started out to be this: a *modus vivendi* whereby the plain man could get for his children as fair a start—physically, morally, and

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intellectually—as any citizen. We have reneged almost completely on that deliberate purpose; but in the West that old wind of doctrine blows steadily in one's ears. We have all, in America, grown more pagan; revolted against Puritanism in the direction of materialism. That, I think, cannot be contested. But it cannot be contested, either, that the comparative lack of social elaboration, the better climate, the more abounding opportunity for healthy and natural rather than unhealthy and artificial pleasures, the more modest conception of what constitutes a fortune, and the less depleted heritage of earlier American ideals concerning life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—that all these make the Far Western paganism a pleasanter sort than ours. I am not speaking of Southern California, which is, humanly and socially speaking, a special case, and is loathed by the citizen of Denver, Reno, Salt Lake, Seattle, Portland, or Albuquerque more deeply than by any Easterner. Los Angeles and its environs are not "Far West" at all. The reasons are profoundly interesting—but they do not belong here.

The informality of the West is not only a tradition but a fact—the origin, no doubt, of the prejudice of many Easterners against their fellow citizens beyond the Mississippi. A formal habit can be forced upon the average American by just two

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things: Anglo-Saxon reticence, and elaborate social paraphernalia. Elaborate social paraphernalia do not exist in the Far West as they exist in the East. The mere fact of living out-of-doors more than indoors would prevent it, even if there were not other social and economic obstacles. Reticence, moreover, is difficult to keep up in the same way when a lot of people have to face simple problems together in a new country. If half a hundred people are making a new town out of nothing, they have to "get together"; and primitive living destroys formal privacy first of all. You count, chiefly, for your value in and to the group; and naturally, where you were born or how you have hitherto lived makes very much less difference than what you happen to be good for on the spot. Pioneer conditions are not very far back even of the older towns; and the creation of new ones in the wilderness is going on all the time. Informal: of course they are informal, judged by court standards. "Wild and woolly?" Well, hardly. They are more friendly; they are kinder; they are more natural. They are more given, perhaps, than Easterners to spontaneous association with their fellow-men. Almost every man you see wears the insignia of some fraternal organization or other. They have not the Eastern prejudice against thus labeling themselves and their fellowships. On the

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other hand, they have no prejudice against any elaboration of life they can afford which does not spoil essentials. They have not the illusion (fairly widespread through our country) that in order to be a good American you must be thoroughly narrow-minded, and ignorant of many things. What they felt in the Far West (if newspapers are any index) about Magnus Johnson's collarless and coatless campaign in Minnesota was chiefly scorn—scorn that any man should think that he could win the suffrages of American citizens by behaving like a pig. Senator Johnson did win the suffrages of American citizens, as we all know; but not without bitter regret on the part of other American citizens that anyone should be fooled into believing that dressing like a gentleman in public was un-American. "To be vulgar is not the way to appeal to the American farmer, who is, himself, a gentleman," was the gist of it. Perhaps the Minnesota farmers are a special brand. In any case, politics are not our concern.

Informal, yes: according to certain definitions of form. But as you stand in those terraced gardens of the Northwest, staring through cunning vistas in the Douglas firs to the blue of the Sound or to the wide arc of snow-topped mountains—friendliness all about you among the roses—you wonder if formality is not as well spent on "gar-

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den-walls and galleries" as on the practice of verbal frigidity. Their groups and their engagements seem more elastic than ours, more readily adaptable to change of weather or a new event. Policy and habit seem less strong than impulse when it comes to choosing a pleasure. They are ready to like you, to give you the benefit of the doubt. The brooding stiffness and suspicion, the infinite social documentation that characterize the initial stages of acquaintance in the East, are there in far less measure. No doubt you have to prove yourself there as anywhere; but they are perhaps clearer in their own minds as to what they like, and therefore do not have to listen so profoundly to what a hundred other people say. Socially speaking, as climatically, it is a more radiant air.

It comes, probably, of being preoccupied with things in themselves, not with the infinite dim contexts of things. That preoccupation with the immediate object can make for rudeness and crudeness, as we all know. It is their wisdom in the Northwest to have made their list of essentials wisely, to have seen what the community had a right to demand of life—their luck, of course, to have had those essentials easier to come by than anywhere else, perhaps, in the country. True, they seem to have taken more literally than the rest of us the historic declaration that man has a right

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to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. But other factors count as well. They have not as yet accepted plutocracy as the ideal—or the inevitable—social form. Plutocracy, indeed, can triumph only when wealth has become a superstition in itself. The profiteer or the self-made millionaire can “break in” only to a society where wealth is a superstition—and you will notice that wealth never becomes a superstition until a great many people have inherited it. In new country, fortunes are sometimes made quickly—and, equally often, lost quickly. Inconvenient, to the last degree, to lose the money you have made; but, surrounded as you are by shifting conditions of gain and loss, of luck and chance, it does not of necessity discourage you finally. At whatever stage of success or unsucccess you may be, there are plenty of your own kind in the same boat. I think it is not too much to say that wealth is not, in the Far West, the acid test that it is in the East. Being a decent sort and a helpful member of the community counts much more in a country that has seen men rich one day and poor the next and rich again the day after. When a Westerner is really bitten by the plutocratic idea, he usually makes for the East, where plutocracy is accepted. It is a perilous thing to say of any part of our country; but I believe it to be true that in our Northwestern

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civilization wealth is judged more on its own merits than on the Atlantic seaboard, where a man has only to be rich enough, it would seem, to be credited with all kinds of virtues. We are all aware of communities that pride themselves on caring more for family or for personal distinction than for wealth; but one has seen those proud requirements break down too many times before the onslaught of enough millions.

Civilization may be variously defined; but the United States certainly started out to make its own definition very clear. My own belated guess is that the citizens who come nearest to being civilized according to authentic American tradition are to be found west of the Rocky Mountains, between San Francisco Bay and the Straits of Juan de Fuca.

Chapter Four

NEW MEXICO AND THE BACKWASH OF SPAIN

IN tourist-ridden southern California they capitalize Spanish vestiges almost unmercifully. You are never allowed to forget Padre Junipero Serra, that famous Franciscan; he divides the honors with Helen Hunt Jackson's Ramona. They advertise the old Spanish Missions vociferously; and these are worth advertising, being historically romantic, physically lovely, and tragic in decay. I say no word against the Missions, for of them one does not tire. It is a great regret to me that I have seen only a few of them. One tires immediately and profoundly of Ramona, for she seems to have had as many places of sojourn as Washington had headquarters or Lafayette had four-posters, and it is all rather silly and forced. The Spanish influence, which in San Francisco is a single element naturally felt among many others, becomes in southern California an over-emphasized business asset. The populated region is overwhelmingly American, and Spain withdrew

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from it long since. There are plenty of Mexican families clustered in the towns and villages; but they are exotic and totally without influence. Progressive America, seeking health and wealth, has swamped them. Southern California has no continuous history that you can trace visibly; and Missions and such are mere furbished monuments to catch the tourist's eye. There is really no practical use for Spanish in Los Angeles or San Diego counties. Kansan or Iowan would be more to the purpose.

Farther east, however, lie Arizona, New Mexico, and southern Texas; and in this real Southwest, Spain has played a different rôle. Here she is no licensed purveyor of the picturesque, long since elbowed out of the foreground except as, costumed on street corners, she can sell her wares to the tourist. Nowhere, except in Virginia and along the Massachusetts coast, can our country boast a continuous civilization of three centuries' duration—save in the Southwest. St. Augustine is hardly a case in point, since St. Augustine to-day has nothing whatever in common with St. Augustine as it was founded. There has been nothing Spanish about St. Augustine these hundred years. Not even in Virginia or Massachusetts is there so *obviously* continuous a civilization (such as it is) as in New Mexico. Changes have been little felt

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here since the sixteenth century and the *conquistadores*.

The New Mexicans have suffered few if any of the irruptions and interruptions so characteristic of our violent national history. They were separated from the vicissitudes and triumphs of our colonial period by two thousand miles of unknown territory, by Spanish blood, and by inherited Spanish rule. In the early nineteenth century they automatically became Mexican citizens instead of Spanish subjects. It must have made very little social and human difference. The bitterness of the free-soil controversies did not touch the New Mexicans, for they were not included in the Louisiana Purchase. Nor did they share in the thrilling, if not wholly creditable, adventure of the Texan Republic. (The Texan Santa Fé Expedition was only a grim joke.) Nothing, indeed, of our feverish influence touched them, except for the traders who travelled the Santa Fé Trail in the 'twenties and 'thirties. After twenty years or so of the Santa Fé trade, came our war with Mexico. Then, and only then, did their civilization begin to be affected by the United States.

The astonishing fact, to the sojourner in the New Mexican desert, is that the effect of the United States has been so slight. You are surrounded here by an old Spanish civilization. The

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Spanish of it is much more emphatic everywhere than the American of it. There is, also, of course, the Indian of it. "In a land of sand and ruin and gold," I used to quote to myself; the tone-color of the familiar words seeming to fit the landscape peculiarly, even though the gold is rather a matter of sunlight on the desert than of treasures within the earth. Pueblos, adobe houses, barren beautiful mountains, burros, mesas, dry arroyos, the Indian and Mexican skins—all blend together into a soft, sad, dusty brown that the imagination connects immemorially with Spain. The emptiness, the sleepiness, the sudden note in costume or church altar of gorgeous tawdriness, are as un-American as anything to be found in our great country.

There is really very little United States to be savored. The country has never stopped being Spanish in temper, in language, in blood, in habit of life. "Santa Fé?" said a good American in Albuquerque, "Oh, it's just a Mexican town. Their principal pastime up there is doing nothing." I suspect that he was right; and certainly Santa Fé is far less American than the capital of any other sovereign state that I have ever seen. I do not know how much they "do" in Santa Fé, beyond making corrupt politics more corrupt, but visually speaking it is more Spanish than American, and more Mexican than Spanish. All

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speeches made in the New Mexico legislature have to be translated by an interpreter into Spanish, sentence by sentence, as they are uttered. You cannot live in this country satisfactorily without speaking Spanish—and you certainly cannot safely commit a crime without knowledge of that tongue, for juries are apt to be unacquainted with English. The Anglo-Saxon American has not, according to his little habit, dominated the scene immediately on arrival. Except in a commercial sense, he has not “taken over” the country at all; and up to a very short time ago the Spaniard owned most of the land, as he still owns the New Mexican soul.

Why has the habitually dominant race failed here, when it has triumphed at once in every other part of the West? That continuous civilization is, no doubt, one of the main reasons. The Southwest was not “new” country; it was the oldest section, humanly speaking, of United States territory. But southern California also was “old”; and southern California has been socially and physically conquered with no delay and no trouble. The more important—even if secondary—reason is probably this: that there was nothing in the Southwest that the dominant race supremely wanted. Gregg (the chief contemporary authority on the Santa Fé trade) says that the Indian

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attacks on the Santa Fé caravans were few and negligible *because the white men carried no ploughs*. They threatened no permanent settling—or stealing—of the land. They were frankly transitory; and their trains were like the great tea-caravans that used to wander back and forth between central Asia and Archangel on the Arctic. The same Pawnees that were the terror of the Oregon Trail let the Santa Fé traders by.

Tragic episodes occurred, of course, now and then, but they were far less molested than the northern pioneers. The Southwestern desert did not lure the farmer or the family man. There were no women and children on the Santa Fé Trail—unless now and then a Spanish lady returning to Santa Fé or Chihuahua by the land route. Of precious metals there seems always to have been a certain amount in New Mexico, but on a modest scale. The nature and conformation of the country made them difficult to get at. You cannot do placer-mining where there are no rivers; you cannot mine comfortably at all where there is no water to drink. The Mexicans worked the mines in desultory fashion, but it was mostly sheep country. There was never any big “strike,” never any gold-rush or occasion for a gold-rush. Nothing, in other words, to lure the adventurer

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or to tempt the sober citizen. The great deposits of coal that are said to underlie the soil of New Mexico are still undeveloped. The Americans seeped into New Mexico; they never really invaded it or colonized it.

Even later, in the days of the cattle kings—well, it was sheep country, not cattle country, and remains so to this day. Within a very few years they have tried again to make cattle country of it, and have mostly failed. That sparsely inhabited land has been left very largely to the people who have adapted themselves to its peculiarities and are satisfied. The only thing an ambitious man could acquire was land by the square mile; and he hardly knew what to do with the land if he got it. There has been plenty of land-grabbing in the Southwest—organized pillage of the Indians and violent work with the vast holdings of Spanish land owners—but there has never been a real American invasion.

The later seepage into northern New Mexico has been caused very largely by two discoveries: first, that it is a marvellously curative climate for tuberculosis; second, that the Pueblo Indians and their ways and works are what is known as "picturesque." "Lungers" and artists have taken to New Mexico in numbers. The Middle West, which seems to be obsessed with the idea of pack-

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ing itself and its property into an automobile and looking for a pleasanter habitation somewhere between the Rockies and the Pacific, has dropped a good many pilgrims in the Southwest, although most of them push on to southern California. There are, as everyone knows, two towns worthy the name in northern New Mexico: Santa Fé and Albuquerque. Santa Fé despises Albuquerque for an uninteresting and commercially-minded place; Albuquerque despises Santa Fé because it is divided between politicians and aesthetes. In Santa Fé they shudder at the nearly unrelieved Americanism of Albuquerque; in Albuquerque they shudder at the riotous living and the shameless politics of Santa Fé. You take your choice.

Concerning Santa Fé, I must state my own case in the very teeth of the Santa Fé cult. A lovelier situation than this it would be unreasonable to ask and hard to find. Santa Fé is uplifted seven thousand feet in air, amid a tumble of mountain ranges—the Jemez to the west, the Pecos melting into the Sangre de Cristo on the east. It has the charm of the city to which you must climb. Those of us who were taught in youth that it was the oldest town in the United States have dreamed of it, off and on, since childhood. Well, the Plaza is there, with the Governor's Palace (1608, I believe) ranged along one side; with a monument,

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too, marking the end of the Santa Fé Trail. There is on the outskirts the old, old church of San Miguel; there are mementos of the turbulent Mexican history of the first third of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, they have developed in New Mexico a thing called the "Santa Fé type of architecture"—a graceless blend of Spanish and Hopi. The Spanish type exemplified in the old Governor's Palace has a distinction, a charm, a fitness of its own: you cannot do better in this climate and this landscape. The Hopi house is, however, perfectly unadaptable to American life; and the grotesques that cluster near the Santa Fé Plaza are disillusioning—would be pathetic were they not so strident. The State buildings are like many others scattered over our broad land; merely uncompromisingly American and bad. The New Fonda Hotel, the Art Museum, the Post Office, are like nothing on earth except their own impossible selves; and if this Hopi nightmare was first dreamed in Santa Fé, one wonders on what insane root the architects had dined. After all, they had the excellent if unpretentious Governor's Palace in their line of vision before they went to sleep. The interior of the Art Museum, the lobby of the hotel, are well decorated and very handsome in their way; but inevitably one steps outside again and beholds the impossible façades. An

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Indian pueblo can be very impressive; but the American conception of modernized and adapted Hopi is like Mrs. Todgers's idea of a wooden leg—though I believe, actually, Mr. Pecksniff never acquired that contribution to Art.

It is partly the architecture, no doubt, that makes Santa Fé so disillusioning. As a Mexican town, it is not a very good Mexican town; rather undignified and squalid. As an American town, it is not successful. Climate and situation apart, it would be for most of us a depressing place of residence. To live in the very spot where New Mexican politics are being daily perpetrated would be bad enough in itself. Besides, the devotees of the picturesque have turned Santa Fé—as one understands they have turned Tahiti—into a sort of Greenwich Village. Certain resorts in the neighborhood of Santa Fé must be heavenly places to linger in, for every prospect pleases. But the capital itself they have ruined. Even the delightful Governor's Palace, in becoming a museum, has inevitably become dismal. Of Taos, sixty miles to the north, I cannot speak. There is some good painting done at Taos, as we know; more than that I cannot say. I have never been there—and fancy I shall never go, since one normally reaches Taos *via* the tragic and tawdry city of the Holy Faith of St. Francis. Some prices are

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too high to pay for the satisfaction of minor curiosities, and the spectacle of Santa Fé is disheartening—especially as one's desire had been set on it long since.

If divorce has "made" Reno financially, tuberculosis has "made" both Albuquerque and Santa Fé, I take it, in the same sense. Albuquerque is not a particularly attractive place, for, though it has an altitude of four thousand feet, and commands adorable views of the Sandia mountains (for which I, myself, have an incurable passion) it is municipally ugly. Moreover, the endless rows of little shacks that consist chiefly of a screened porch with a bed on it, are depressing. The object of the shack is pathetically clear; and the inhabitants—hopeful or hopeless—take no trouble to beautify their surroundings. The shack seems no more like a home than the automobile you pass, parked for the night in the open desert, forty miles from anything except the Santa Fé Trail. You have to work for vegetation in these desert towns, and the number of Albuquerque householders who feel that a dirt chicken-run is a good substitute for a front lawn is appalling. The American part of Albuquerque is entirely hideous. Its only charm lies in the few old Spanish gardens, the frankly Mexican life. The Santa Fé Railroad hotel—the Alvarado—is the

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only beautiful building that Americans have erected there, and many of the Spanish houses are falling to decay. Though Albuquerque is much less advertised than Santa Fé, it is more accessible and, in several ways, more rewarding. Santa Fé is not easy to get to—this is the third time I have taken the Santa Fé route home from the Coast, and the first time I have ever achieved Santa Fé itself. Not even this time did we attempt to reach it by train—though there is a train, sometimes, from Lamy on the main line. We motored to it from Albuquerque. I shall always motor to Santa Fé from Albuquerque. Not only is the drive one of the most beautiful and one of the most exciting in the country (those who have dared La Bajada Hill know what I mean) but Albuquerque, which does not make Santa Fé's proud pretensions, is less depressing than the capital. It is, moreover, an excellent centre for wondrous journeys into the ever-marvellous desert, to the feet of divinely beautiful mountains. Except for a new hotel just finished (a protest, apparently, against the benevolent despotism of the Santa Fé Railroad) the citizens of Albuquerque have not indulged in the "Hopi house" vagary. The hotel—I forget what it is to be named—is an enormous Hopi house, worse perhaps than anything in Santa Fé. But so far it is alone. True,

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the University of New Mexico is more or less Hopi; but it has the grace to sit down at a distance, among its own trees, and not to mass its Hopi-ness in the public vision.

Let it be said here that one was tempted—while sympathizing with the desire of Albuquerqueans to thumb their noses at the Santa Fé Railroad—to give them Macchiavellian advice. They should approach the Santa Fé not with insult, but with flattery and argument. They cannot buck the Fred Harvey system: consider the strategic position of the railroad—sole carrier for a region five hundred miles in width and fifteen hundred miles in length. Consider also its organization. A system that can run a successful hotel on the brink of the Grand Canyon, to which all water must be carried sixty miles, and can pick up fruit and game in the middle of nowhere, to serve to you fresh that night in the dining car, has nothing to fear from a rival hotel in a place where it has an excellent one of its own. Albuquerque should have approached the Santa Fé Railroad on its knees, saying “O king, live forever.” Then it might have risen to its feet and proceeded with cogent and practical argument.

Albuquerque has a right to insist on its position as the only convenient tourist centre between the Mojave desert and Colorado. It is on the main

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line of the railroad—which Santa Fé is not; and it is, in any case, a better centre for excursions—being three thousand feet lower, and tapping not only the Santa Fé region but also a vast, picturesque country to the west. It is the junction for the line down to El Paso and old Mexico. Moreover, it is a city, with some of a city's resources; not, like Santa Fé, a much disfigured museum-piece. To go to Taos and all the beautiful crannies of extreme northwestern New Mexico, you can start more easily from Santa Fé; but Albuquerque is actually within striking distance of more pueblos than is the capital. If from Santa Fé you wish to reach Isleta, Laguna, or Acoma, you must first come sixty miles westward to Albuquerque; and San Domingo, Cochiti, Abo, Sandia are as well reached from Albuquerque as from Santa Fé. As for all the tourist goals in eastern Arizona, Albuquerque is sixty miles nearer them than Santa Fé, and there is no La Bajada Hill to negotiate. The Santa Fé Railroad has a charming trick of building good hotels suddenly in the middle of nothing at all; but it cannot make points of departure and repair places like Flagstaff or Williams or Gallup. They do, however, owe it to the hundreds of thousands who are bent on seeing America last—if not first—to make a

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tourist centre somewhere in the beautiful and historic Southwest.

The sad Southwest: that is the phrase that recurs most often to one's lips when one dwells upon this region. Beauty is itself inspiriting; yet if there be a beauty in itself melancholy, it is the beauty of the inoccupable desert. There is a sharp distinction to be drawn between this and the black desert, say, of central Oregon, or the "bad lands" of North Dakota, which the devil seems to have created for an easy lesson in discouragement. This has an aesthetic, almost a mystical value, and is totally lacking in the sardonic. On the other hand, the private question one asks is not, as in the bad lands, "What can man do with this?" but rather, confronted as one is with ancient vestiges and the slow persistence of history, "What has man done with this?" In New Mexico, the immediate answer does not make for optimism. What man has done with it is all about you.

The answer to the question is two dying civilizations, and a third which, so far, is only feasting on their corruption. The Pueblo Indian; the Spanish Mexican; the American, who is usually either a politician or a sentimentalist. Before the bar of judgment the sentimentalist will fare better than the politician, for, as Senator Walsh of Montana has recently reminded us, "You cannot im-

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peach a man for stupidity"; but one comes to consider it a nice question whether the Pueblo Indian will not suffer as much from his misguided friends as from his cynical despoilers. The best citizens of New Mexico, by all accounts, are the members of the old Spanish families. They are rapidly being shorn of their power and their estate; and none of the invaders, apparently, are intelligent enough to be sentimental about *them*. Perhaps the invaders could not break into a genuine, if alien, aristocracy even if they would. Certainly one comes to feel that life in New Mexico would be humanly and socially tolerable only if one could contrive to establish relations with the survivors of the old Mexican aristocracy.

New Mexico is, all in all, a wild and uncivilized state. Life is cheap, ignorant Mexican juries are easily packed, and if a sheriff grows (which seldom happens) too zealous in behalf of law and order, it is pretty difficult, in the end, to find out who killed him. The politicians of New Mexico have never had an enviable reputation. Their chief activity has usually been lining their pockets at the expense of the Indian. The state's most distinguished political figure at the present day is, one supposes, ex-Senator Fall. Senator Bursum, to be sure, achieved some notoriety recently with his unsuccessful Indian bill—

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which was nothing like sō bad as the uninformed public, stirred up by the "friends of the Indian," believed it to be. The Bursum Bill was faulty; but it was frankly a compromise, a makeshift way of dealing with a situation that had grown legally and practically intolerable; and the manifesto against it which emanated from Santa Fé was certainly as faulty as the bill itself.

The Indian has been ill served by his friends, and one is sometimes inclined to pity an Indian Bureau, however incompetent, which has to stand between the rapacious politician and the devotee who is ruining the Indian morally, aesthetically, and socially, as fast as ever his kind heart and muddled brain will permit. I omit any reference to the men and women—there are plenty of them—who are merely getting a new sensation out of the Indian, and exploit him for their own excitement, amusement, reputation, and trivial sense of power. It is for the real friends of the Indian one is concerned; for all right-minded folk must be unofficially and sincerely his friends.

The red man has had hard luck; and one sometimes wonders if we have not harmed him as much since we grew sentimental about him as we did in the old days when we destroyed him at sight if possible. We have stolen unconscionably from him; we have also wasted a great deal of money

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on him. He is a very conservative person; and to attempt to Christianize—especially to Protestantize—him is as silly as it is impossible. To force the Pueblo Indian to a government school is an expensive piece of stupidity. Either American education “takes” or it does not. If it does not, he goes back to the pueblo and reverts; if it does, he is merely miserable, for the pueblo civilization is in his blood, and his half-hearted approximations to a United States mode of life are ridiculous and doomed.

The race-prejudice which is so strong in the Anglo-Saxon temperament is much weakened when it is a question of the red man rather than of the yellow, the brown, and the black; yet most white people are not easily going to admit most red people to real social intimacy. It is only the sensation-seekers who do it, in point of fact—and they do not thereby help the Indian. Neither as a temporary toy nor as a saint and martyr will he be enabled to work out his salvation.

This preoccupation with the Indian on the part of resident and tourist alike is natural enough. You may go to New Mexico convinced that the Pueblo Indian bores you, or that he is merely a vanishing problem; determined therefore to seek for future rather than past factors in Southwestern affairs. All through northern Arizona and north-

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ern New Mexico you will, in spite of yourself, come back to the Indian. The white American is still to a large extent his parasite—clinging to him, whether for the sake of gain or of cheap publicity or of archæological interest or of æsthetic pleasure.

Not to the temporary resident is it given to penetrate the patios of Oteros and Chavezes; to meet face to face, with respect and sympathy, a point of view that derives from a religious and social tradition wholly alien to the Anglo-Saxon American. When, moreover, has Spain ever successfully withstood America on this side of the Atlantic? The Spanish New Mexicans will inevitably pass from prominence and control. As the great men die, their vast holdings are broken up and parcelled out. The younger generation compromises with American ways, often to its own undoing. The atmosphere of a sovereign state of the Union is not favorable to the preservation of Spanish social and domestic traits. Moreover, this northern province of Mexico was, until 1848, literally that; and Mexico is not quite Spain, as we all know. It has had its own prejudices against the mother country; and in the 'thirties a Spaniard from Spain was almost more unpopular in Santa Fé than an American from Missouri.

What is true of Mexico in general must have

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been true of the northern provinces: namely, that the purity of creole blood grew more and more tinged with the darker Indian strain. The Rio Grande had no social significance in those days, and Santa Fé was only a smaller Chihuahua farther to the north. That which differentiated New Mexico from old Mexico before 1848 was what differentiates it, chiefly, now: sparser settling, a greater emptiness, the atmosphere of the outpost and the frontier, a fighting history unbroken since the *conquistadores*—and the Pueblo Indian. The Pueblos may seem a meek race compared with Apaches and Comanches, but they fought in the streets of Santa Fé as late as 1837. In the days of rival governors, rival parties, the pueblos took sides or stayed neutral—and the attitude of a strong pueblo was a matter of real importance. Since the sixteenth century they have spasmodically fought and conquered, have temporized or been bloodily reduced, planned secret revolts, sulked on their mesas, massacred their priests or protected them—but from 1549 to 1849 they always counted heavily in the turbulent history of northern Mexico.

To the Mexican resident they were important as the aboriginal and by no means impotent owners of the soil; to the incoming American they counted, later, as the chief opportunity of the un-

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scrupulous, the most frequent storm centre of politics, and the most positive and vivid asset of the archæologically-minded. This is, in a very real sense, the Pueblo Indian's country. The Indians mix happily enough at fiestas and such like with the humbler Mexicans; and they are of course far outnumbered by the Mexican citizens of the state. They have no objection to speaking Spanish, though they often have a profound objection to speaking English. But though New Mexico is prevaillingly Mexican still—did they not, in Socorro and El Paso, celebrate our recognition of the Mexican government as spontaneously as if it had been a saint's day?—the Mexican sheepherder or farmer is a less positive creature than the Indian. He and his adobe, his sheep, his dogs, his ponies, his children, are the dusty background against which life must move. He has imposed upon this region his language—or the *conquistadores* imposed it for him—and in a general way his religion and his attitude to life. But he is too ignorant, too mongrel, too indolent a creature to win any long-drawn contest, or even to express in his own person the perpetual question, "What are you going to do about *me*?" We are not going to do anything about him except wait for the generations slowly to oust him. He confuses the social situation, because in the smaller

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towns and villages he has all the votes and can see to it that his vices are not too hardly dealt with and that vengeance is not too swift.

The Pueblo Indian, on the other hand, is a perpetual interrogation-point; and being a ward of the government, he must be answered. He cannot simply perish vaguely among the rigors of competitive citizenship. For all these reasons, you cannot get away from the Indian in the Southwest—not until he is quite dead. We found it useless to try, in spite of our original prejudices born of much sentimental public and private nonsense about him.

The Pueblo Indian is, one gathers, a very respectable as he is certainly a very fine-looking person. It is not he who shoots honest road commissioners in the back, or drowns objectionable ranchers in their own sheep vats, or pays so much a head to the jury for acquitting him of murder. He is very conservative, he is very proud—and he is not a citizen. Nor is he a rich man. An Osage Indian from Oklahoma who has struck oil and proceeds to pile his women-folk and their enormous vanity cases into an expensive car, to jaunt westward and crow, in the worst American slang, over his red kin on the reservations, is as objectionable as any human being to be met with

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on New York's east side. (Oil, they have been suggesting lately, is a contaminating thing.) The Pueblo is a farmer; and his scorn of what the industrial schools can teach him about agriculture is not only deep but well-founded. It is characteristic both of him and of us that the state of California should spend large sums of money and the time of experts to determine how to save the Imperial Valley from the dire results of over-irrigation, and eventually discover a way that the New Mexican Indians have been quietly practising for generations. Very like us never to have observed him; very like him never to have told.

The eternal squatting on Indian lands, the vagueness of titles, the consequent piling up of litigation—thousands of cases, stretching over years, that no one can make head or tail of, which it was the honest intention, apparently, of the despised Bursum Bill to find some way out of, even if not a perfect one—have left him, certainly, with shrunken possessions. I am not defending the Bursum Bill; but it is clear that even its objectionable clauses grew out of, and were conditioned by, an absolutely impossible situation which was in itself worse than almost any solution. It was not the cold-blooded steal that the country was made to feel it was; and the points made against

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it were often illogical and ill-taken.* The big steals came earlier. No honest American citizen, one supposes, would defend our treatment of the Indian since we frankly conquered him; yet one has a certain sympathy with Indian commissioners and Indian officials. On the whole, the government has latterly been trying to do the decent thing—frustrated at every turn by all the people who are concerned with the Indian: concerned to rob him or concerned to protect him. In the Southwest the case is perhaps most glaring, because the Pueblo Indian is not, and in historic times never has been, nomadic. His pueblos were going strong as self-governing cities when the Spanish came; he had developed his own religion, his own art, his own political ideals, and, living as inaccessibly as possible, he asked only to be let alone. He cared as little, really, for scalps as for the blessings of Catholicism. The *conquistadores*, who were treasure-mad, would not let him alone, and we all know the results.

The pueblos took over Catholic Christianity and accepted resident friars in their pueblos. They built churches, a hundred and fifty to two hundred years before California did, and the New

* It is a pleasure to note that since the sentences above were written, a revised bill satisfactory both to Senator Bursum and the "friends of the Indian" has been passed by Congress. The commission provided by it is now at work.

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Mexican mission churches are still in use. It seems to be admitted on all sides that the priests have been good for their morals, though the Indians' Christianity is at least as eclectic as that of St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie. The conservatism of the Pueblo Indian is something that it takes more than three hundred years of an alien faith to disturb. Rome, with its profound psychological insight, has permitted them—even as it did when it converted the Germans—to keep their paganism pretty well unimpaired. They dance before the patron saint of the pueblo—but the dance is what it always was in character and meaning; expurgated a little, no doubt, out of deference to the conquering pale-face. One tribe—Zuñi, I think—has come out in the course of the last decades and proclaimed itself definitely non-Christian. Most of the Southwestern Indians do not trouble to announce the fact.

Here was, one cannot but feel, a beautiful chance for the white man to have peace with the red man. The tribes had to go from the vast prairie country because the American needed it; but the American did not need the Pueblo farm lands, which were neither rich nor vast; and the Pueblo could have gone on living his life without detriment to the social fabric. He might, in that uncoveted region, have had from us the peace

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that Spain—which *would* believe in hoards of gold and the Seven Cities of this or that—never gave him. The Indian, however, is always the first person to be stolen from because, on account of his anomalous position, he is the safest. So we lost our chance of preserving his semi-civilization unimpaired, of co-existing with him in a dignified manner.

Then came the tourist, who always ruins an alien peasantry. The Indians learned to sell their wares at stations and by roadsides, and learned also to beg. The children of any pueblo stretch out their hands and whine for "*cinque centavos*" as you pass. Their pride has been subtly corroded by the traveller, no doubt, as has their art. Most of the things they want to sell you nowadays are horrors—as are most of the things that have come out of Japan since Japanese stuff has become a fad. The old Indian paintings and weavings had a certain beauty and quality—but where do you find them now? Not in the hands of the flushed sightseer, surely. Their potters and their smiths still have a knack and a conscience—until they begin supplying a market. Then you get things as bad as the modern Japanese product in the department stores.

And—let the truth be told—none of it was ever *great* art, anyhow. Their vanity may well be flat-

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tered by all the artists who have wanted to paint them, the white folk who have wanted to live in their pueblos, the misguided people who construct "pageants" out of them. The pathetic fact is that it is the less respectable Indian, or the less respectable traits in that Indian, which condescend to endure this sort of patronage. The by-product of it is to be seen in the Indian who will not let himself be photographed save at an exorbitant price. The Indian you respect, as man to man, is not the handsome young buck whose profession in life is dressing up as an artist's model, or who enters into the social life of white men and women. The ones you respect are more apt to be the real residents of the pueblo, who work their farms, cherish their traditions, depart in no wise from their own courses, and object—not physically or formally, but temperamentally—to white visitors.

I recall with pleasure one or two older inhabitants of Laguna pueblo, their dignity, their fine manners, and their uncompromising but quite unaffected Indianness. One of them, never forgotten, is still admiringly referred to by us as "the gentleman from Laguna." His courtesy was complete; but I do not think he would have cared to sit at meat with us—I hope not. The English have learned better than we the right manner with the honorable member of an alien race, which consists

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in respecting rather than ignoring his differences, in admitting the clash of traditions without dwelling on it, in neither despising him nor flattering him, in meeting only when and as both races can meet without offending any convention of the other. It may be said, too, that it is the English man who achieves this golden mean. The English woman stays out of the game—which is a help. We Americans are apt either to despise the alien or to fawn on him—muddling all comparative values in either case. “No good Indian but a dead Indian” is at one extreme; going into their pueblos and living with them (unless for official reasons) is at the other. Only mutual disillusion can come of the latter course.

Not long ago the New York newspapers, which are always rich in astonishing incident, presented us with an account of some Pueblo Indians arriving in New York on their way to Washington, and giving one of their tribal dances in the Town Hall before an interested group of clergymen and others. The episode was conceived, one fears, by friends of the Indian. A corn dance in the Town Hall of New York City! It is at such a point as this that one begins to be genuinely and unashamedly sorry for the Indian—to think that perhaps he does need fending for. The occasion for this absurdity (or indignity, if you like) was

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clear enough: various Pueblo Indians were on their way to Washington in connection with a Pueblo Land bill of sorts, and their white friends thought it an excellent opportunity to show an eastern public how innocuous are the tribal dances that the government talks of suppressing. But there is a lot of tortured logic in this matter; and if the friends of the Indian would condescend to talk things over with people officially responsible for the Indian's welfare, they would discover that to themselves is in large measure due the threat of forbidding his dances.

You find many people pulling at the Indian in different directions; his "friends" (rival groups of them); the white men who sink their consciences while dealing with the red man, and care not what becomes of him once they have stripped him; the officials, competent and incompetent, who are employed to advise and teach and look after him—and, of course, the missionaries. There is also a queer mass of public opinion, variable but bulky. The friends of the Indian say that the dances are beautiful, symbolic, harmless, and that it is cruel and stupid and short-sighted of the government to stop them. So far one quite agrees—and continues, I may say, to agree even though some of the dances are perhaps not so beautiful or so harmless as they are stated to be. They are the In-

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dians' own affair, in any case. It is currently believed among the native American residents of Albuquerque that the people of one of the obscurer pueblos (I will not name it) still contrive to sacrifice a living baby every year to the snake-god. This may or may not be true. If it is, the custom is neither profoundly beautiful nor wholly harmless, and no one could blame an Indian Bureau that interfered. Neither from officials nor from sentimentalists did we hear it; only from the native-born resident, who took the Indians philosophically, having known them well, collectively and individually, all his life.

Within a fortnight the Secretary of the Interior has declared, in answer to a petition from the San Ildefonso pueblo, that the guardians of the Indians have no intention of interfering with religious dances "or those given for pleasure or entertainment which are not degrading." But he adds, "There are certain practices, however, which are against the laws of nature or moral laws, and all who wish to perpetuate the integrity of their race must refrain from them." Cryptic, to say the least; and committing the government to nothing.

The real storm centre at the present moment seems to be the Hopi Snake Dance, held each August on the Hopi reservation in northern Arizona, alternately on the first and third mesas—

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at Walpi and Oraibi, if you prefer the names. We came too late for the Snake Dance last summer—and it is a weary way getting there, anyhow; but Harold Bell Wright and all sorts of respectable people were present, and I have seen no protests in the newspapers. They do say—everyone says—that the Hopi Snake Dance has not much longer to run; that the government is sure to stop it. Apart from one's baffled desires—for the Hopi Snake Dance, on whichever mesa, is one of the few things I can hardly bear to die without having seen—one hopes that the government will have the common sense not to interfere. Their only good argument against it seems to be that preparation for it unfits the partakers for normal work during a good many weeks of each year. The snakes are entirely real and venomous; and the only way the priests can deal with them, apparently, is to subsist for a long time before the dance on a curious secret diet. They starve themselves into a kind of anæmia—no blood flows, I understand, when the serpent strikes—and drug themselves also into immunity to the poison. While the process is going on, they are far from being able and industrious citizens. What of it? one cannot but ask. Are they not perhaps making as important a contribution to contemporary life by preserving for us an ancient ritual as by harvest-

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ing a little more corn? A man is useful to the community by virtue of his peculiar gifts. Almost anyone can raise corn and peaches, but those who can preserve and perform the Snake Dance are few. To the people who object on the score that it is a pagan ceremonial, one has nothing to say. *It is a pagan ceremonial.* Again, and more emphatically, what of it? Are we or are we not going to be faithful to our original promise of religious liberty for all dwellers within our land? It would take a Klansman, I think, to say "no" with real and pious conviction. So long as the Indian does not harm others—and no one can accuse him of trying to propagate his faith, or of asking anyone else to develop anæmia—he has a perfect right, under the Constitution of the United States, to pursue his private cults. The Roman Church has not seen fit, in three hundred years, to interfere with his ritual: are Protestants going to be less intelligent and less tolerant?

"But they say 'they' are going to stop all the dances," some friend of the Indian says to you, in righteous and terrified wrath.

To which, at long last, one's reply comes to be as follows. "We hope 'they' won't. It would, I agree, be the last insult to a proud race that is dying, and dying in our power. But if 'they' do anything so unreasonable, you will have been

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largely to blame. Of most of the dances no one has ever complained—or ever would have complained effectively, unless you had begun to capitalize, artificialize, exploit them. ‘They’ are probably justified, to some extent, in saying that the dances take the Indians away from their farms, and spoil them, and may eventually bring them to poverty. This arid land takes a lot of arduous cultivating. People who dance all the time can’t manage it. The Indians, however, managed both to dance and to farm, until you came. Now the pueblos are crowded with white folk on feast-days—and of course the temptation is to charge a thumping admission fee instead of raising funds in a more laborious way.

“Moreover, instead of piously protecting the real, the sincere, the immemorial seasonal dances, what have you done? Created a lot of new occasions. You have invented an intertribal ceremonial at Gallup which is directly contrary to every Indian habit and tradition, and you drag them there from all over to make a perfectly meaningless festival. In September you bring them into Santa Fé to do all sorts of stunts which have no significance whatever in the Plaza of Santa Fé, precisely because the dances *are* religious, seasonal, and local. Abolish your silly Santa Fé pageant; give up your idiotic invention at Gallup; stop dressing the

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Indian up and bribing or flattering him into posing, in and out of season, for third-rate painters. Give guarantees to the government that you will stop playing the fool with the Pueblo Indian—wasting his time, corrupting his integrity, and making a holy show of his religion—and perhaps the government might even reconsider.

“That your intentions are of the best, one does not doubt; but were archæology only æsthetics, mere taste should show you that a religious ceremony loses all validity when you remove it from the time, the place, and the occasion that it was created to fit. No person with a sense of the fitness of things is going, if he can possibly help it, to witness a corn dance or a rain dance or whatever in the Plaza of Santa Fé or the Town Hall of New York, or watch the tribes ‘get together’ in the tourist season at Gallup.”

You might suspect from the Santa Fé handbook that the Snake Dance is hard to get to. But no one would suspect that discomfort and delay attend on him who would visit Acoma. It must be confessed, however, that Acoma is one of the things for which one must “pay.” For this, as for so many things, one finds Albuquerque the best point of departure. Indeed it is so hard to get to any point on the Santa Fé (except the Grand Canyon, which is pampered with every sort of

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special service) that the wise thing to do is, once having contrived to get to Albuquerque, to stop there and make it headquarters for all one's exploration of northern New Mexico and eastern Arizona. Greatly, indeed, as I desire the Hopi Snake Dance, I shall go to it only if Mr. Louis Clifford of Albuquerque will undertake to drive me there and back, dealing with flooded arroyos, détours across the trackless desert, Indians with no English, and tin cans without openers—with perfect and easy mastery. Thanks to him we reached Acoma safely when the Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce had cold feet about it.

It is not within the scope of this article to dwell on Acoma. Let it merely be taken as illustrative of the whole pueblo problem. The legend that the Acomans lived originally—very far back, since we know Acoma was going strong in 1549—on the Enchanted Mesa, seems to have been exploded, like many other cherished theories. Few people have been on top of the *Mesa Encantada*, and descriptions of human vestiges thereon are not well substantiated. Acoma itself is difficult enough of access; you climb up the cliff-side, using hand-holds and toe-rests cut in the rock. "Acoma is a very backward pueblo," said some official person at Laguna, who preferred the young product of the government schools to its unreclaimed elders.

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Horizontally fifteen miles from a road, across gashed and hummocky desert, vertically five hundred sheer feet in air, it is what you might call separated from the blessings of civilization. The church of Acoma is a well-known marvel; said, thirty years ago, to be actually the largest church (in area) in the United States, it took forty years, in the seventeenth century, to build, and every cubic inch of earth for the adobe walls and roof, every foot of timber for the beams, had to be carried up the face of the cliff on Indian backs.

The California Missions, so much lovelier, so much newer—and so much more ephemeral—than these of New Mexico, become historically insignificant compared with the queer pueblo churches which have been in active use (some of them) for nearly three hundred years, and are still served by mission priests. A few months ago there were sad rumors that Acoma church was going; the roof is in sore need of repair, and there was no money anywhere—two thousand dollars being the needed sum—to repair it. There are, you see, no Daughters of the Pueblo Revolution (they had a first-rate Revolution in 1680) to form chapters and preserve monuments of Pueblo history; there is no Acoma Association, with lady regents, to protect one of the oldest churches we

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possess. I have been told, however, since beginning this article that certain wise and kind individuals in Denver have guaranteed the repair of the Acoma church roof. I am told also that "they" are threatening to move the inhabitants of the pueblo from Acoma to Acomita in the plain where their farm lands lie. I cannot say—for desert distances are hard to judge in desert air—how many miles away Acomita lies; but it would be hard work to commute from the top of the Rock of Acoma to any place whatsoever, even to the Enchanted Mesa. Let us only hope that the Church on the Rock will be maintained.*

Nowhere else, however, can St. Stephen have quite such a setting and such a prelude for "his" dance. For though there are no Delight-Makers at Acoma, there is the Rock; and while the tom-toms beat in the underground council chamber, the whole cliff thuds and resounds and reverberates about you and beneath you, and you stand at the heart of a monotonous and thrilling vibration of which you cannot determine the place or the source. It is rather too bad that there is not an Acoma Association. And one is inclined to side with the friends of the Indian to this extent: that one wishes the government had a little more respect

* I am informed that an association to aid in the preservation of the old churches of New Mexico has now been organized.

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for the Pueblo Indian as he is, and less for its conception of the hybrid he ought to be.

"In 1540 Coronado made gunpowder in Bernalillo." He mined his sulphur at Jemez, I believe. Bernalillo is still there—in fact, it is the county-seat of Sandoval county, and must see some very queer justice meted out in the course of a year. Bernalillo, Algodones, Domingo, La Bajada—these Spanish villages stretch along the desert between the near Sandias and the distant Jemez, and if one were looking for a Thebaïd one might do worse. An acre of desert should come cheap—some sheep-owning Spanish or American magnate might cut one off for you, without noticing it, from his quarter of a million—and a Mexican can build you an adobe shack in your own back yard. All you do, as has been said, is to convert your own land from the horizontal to the vertical position. You had best not have too much wealth and gear—but who does in a Thebaïd?—for the morals of Sandoval county concerning life and property are not quite up to specification, and though the capital is not far away, the benign influence of the legislature does not seem to extend to any great distance.

You would expect to be killed in Bernalillo or Algodones if you made yourself unpopular; nor would you expect to be avenged. There is no par-

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ticular reason, however, in any such village why you should be unpopular if you neither splurge nor criticize nor shout English at your neighbors. The climate is gorgeous, the landscape lovely, *mañana* is the watchword, and if you are neither ambitious nor quarrelsome nor censorious, I fancy you will be let alone. To make yourself quite solid you would probably need only to make friends with the priest, and now and then—to show that you are human—go off at night with your burro to the neighboring turquoise mine and chip out a few bits of blue stone for yourself. The turquoise mine belongs to Tiffany, but Fifth Avenue is very far away, and the Indians never seem to lack cheap turquoise for their personal use, though one is quite sure they do not buy it from Tiffany.

It would also be well, one supposes, to pretend not to see any *Penitentes*, if one did see them—but the *Penitentes* are to be found rather, one gathers, in the remoter hamlets and the far folds of the hills. The Church, I believe, has almost won its long campaign against the flagellants; though you still hear the old tales of their secret political power, and still hear the classical remark that if you could see the backs of many prominent citizens, you would see them scarred. Not, however, in Bernalillo or Algodones or Domingo, in all proba-

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bility, would you spend Good Friday among the *Penitentes*.

When the Indian has at last perished and the Mexican has been submerged, what will be left here in New Mexico? Only with infinite and costly irrigation does it become white man's country in the productive sense. The climate and the beauty will attract more and more parasites; but they are not the people who make a state and a civilization. Will there come a day when English, not Spanish, is the convenient tongue outside the rare cities? Will the *fiestas* give place to the movies and the adobe walls revert to the soil whence they were digged? The Spanish soul has possessed the land for three centuries, with the Pueblo Indian for sole rival; and, compared with the Anglo-Saxon, these two are brothers-in-arms.

The patron saint of the pueblo receives on his feast day a curious medley of honors: the Mass first, than a pagan dance before his image, and most likely in the afternoon a wholly Spanish *fiesta*, with the Indians looking on, sympathetic but incurious. It is difficult to foresee the future, even after the Indian shall have passed. The Mexican will stick on much longer than he, and the adobe shack will outlast, probably, the Hopi house. All we shall do, no doubt, is to obliterate the graces and preserve the drawbacks of the old

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Spanish civilization. We shall eventually see to it that all our Spanish citizens are desperately poor; for that is our pleasant little conquering way. It is all a matter of the intensity of our desire, the richness of the loot. If they strike oil—or mine their coal—God help them. But if the Southwest can for a time remain lovely and profitless, it can for a time remain Spanish—as it is now.

Chapter Five

RENO

NOTHING is more bitter, we have been told, than a gratified desire. I pondered the saying often during my stay in Nevada. For I had had, for a great many years, a certain curiosity about Reno: a desire to experience it. I had wanted to see Reno, Nevada, as I had wanted to see Butte, Montana, and New Orleans, Louisiana, and San Antonio, Texas. It had struck me that it would be curious and interesting. Here I was, then, with my desire fulfilled, my curiosity free to slake itself; and I very much wished myself elsewhere.

The fact is that Reno, though a neat and pretty town, with one of those Western situations that break the Eastern heart with envy, is a very dull town for the visitor. It is only after the traveller begins to put to himself a few questions, and explore social history for the answers, that it takes on any interest at all. "How Reno got that way"—to use a despicable phrase—is interesting. And the answer is compounded of many subtle Ameri-

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canisms. Reno could not have happened east of the Mississippi, whatever the state divorce laws. In fact, Reno could not have happened—again, whatever the divorce laws—outside the State of Nevada. Nevada is different from all other Western states; and the quality of Nevada is a strong element in the quality of Reno. The dullness is partly the fault of Nevada and partly the fault of Paris.

Let us orient ourselves by stating a few facts. Nevada, which, "set down in the East would fill a space from central Pennsylvania to Georgia, and from Delaware Bay to Ohio" (oh, "goodly is our heritage!"), holds not much more than seventy-five thousand souls. Reno, on the eastern slope of the Sierras, close to the California border, is by far the largest town in the state, having about thirteen thousand citizens. The thirteen thousand do not, presumably, include the several hundred men and women who are always there for "the necessary six months." Goldfield with an odd four thousand (before the fire), Carson City and Sparks with twenty-five hundred apiece, are Reno's only rivals—and you can see that they are not really rivals at all. Reno is the metropolis and the magnet—even the legislators, when the legislature is in session, are apt to stop in Reno and motor to Carson City for their day's

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duties. Moreover, it must be stated as sober fact that Reno as a place "gets" people—not only Nevadans but citizens of other states who have business interests in Nevada and therefore have to visit Reno. More than one rolling stone has rolled there to rest, liking it better than a hundred other places.

Why then call it dull? The answer, as has been said, is partly Nevada and partly Paris.

Reno is dull because its roots—socially, humanly speaking—are fastened in decay. If you like to put it in that way, Reno is sinister. This little town with its girdle of enchanting mountains, its wide well-kept streets, its delightful park where the Truckee River flows—irrigation creating for it a dense greenness in the midst of the hopeless desert—has a fairly equivocal future. Its past is the past of the great mining camps. It was bred in their tradition. The wealth that is in Reno at the present day was made in Goldfield and Tonopah (for there is nothing left in Nevada of what was made longer ago in Virginia City). The Reno magnates are men who knew and took their part in the earlier hectic days—sinking into old age and death now, squandering or saving their "piles," but without any prospect of more "piles" to be made. The gold and silver, you see, have gone. Even the Comstock Lode petered out

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at last; and though they are mining the cheap ore at Virginia and American Flat, though Goldfield and Tonopah go on somehow with dwindling strength, Nevada is forlorn of mining booms. Yet it must never be forgotten that the tradition, the point of view, the human habit of Reno are the tradition, the point of view, the human habit of the mining camp. A mining camp after the gold is gone is not a cheerful or an exciting place; and dabbling in cheap mining stocks, or playing the races (such races!), is a poor substitute for standing with your foot on the rail of the Crystal Bar and watching a fortune swim towards you. The big men, the great adventurers go, and only the little men and the habit of gambling—for lessening stakes—are left. The precious metals made the state; and unlike California, Nevada has not much to fall back on. Oh, yes, there is truck farming round Fallon: the land that is not good enough for cattle will suffice for sheep; and various Italians are slowly enriching themselves by intensive vegetable gardening. But the American population of Nevada has never been of the farming or the ranching type; the obstacles of the desert are too many to have attracted that type. So much for Nevada's part in Reno's dullness.

Reno has no visible industries. It makes its living, as far as one can tell, off the marital un-

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happiness that prevails in forty-seven states of the Union. The divorcées (as they are always called) bring a certain amount of money into the place, and banks, shops, and markets are kept going in that way. The churches are inconspicuous; the few doctors have Chinese herbalists for hot rivals; the lawyers, naturally, are many. The Public Library is so tiny that it could not possibly keep anyone in reading matter for six months, and if there were a run on its shelves, most of the besiegers would have to stop in the street. I remember that during my stay in Reno it was closed for a day or two "in order that a few shelves might be put up in the basement to accommodate books that might from time to time be added." The Washoe County Court House, however, is a handsome building, and quite large enough to accommodate any number of simultaneous decrees. Divorce being the recognized industry—if not, indeed, a monopoly—the lawyers have pooled their interests to the extent of standardizing the fee for a divorce suit. The mere legal fee is not high—it is, or was, three hundred dollars, I believe—but extra expenses are almost certain to be incurred. You can get almost any ingredient of drama in Reno, naturally—from cocaine to the convolutions of Henry James psychology; yet the fact remains that Reno is less interesting than

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it must once have been because of the American habit, in later years, of going to Paris rather than to Nevada for easy divorce. Paris has resources of entertainment, distraction, civilization; and Reno has none. There is indeed an almost cynical refusal on the part of the solid citizenry of Reno to offer any attraction to the temporary resident save the attraction of legal escape from a detested spouse. They do not even change the bills often enough at the movie theatres to guarantee you a fresh one every day or two. Reno is dull; and the measure of stoicism with which the dullness is endured depends wholly on the character of the individual. Any American is likely to find a group of acquaintances in Paris; but he—or she—will find no familiar faces in Reno. It is a lonely adventure, this six months' sojourn in little-populated Nevada. Nor can you mitigate it by running away for a week, now and then, to Salt Lake or San Francisco. They keep tabs on you better than they used. (Reno *has*, in its time, been criticized.) Your six months cannot be docked by so much as a day. If you leave the state, the time of your absence is charged against you, and you have to work it out—"make it up" by prolonging your stay at the other end. You can divorce with ease in the sovereign state of Nevada; but in order to do it you have to stop there. Six months' resi-

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dence is not much, but it has to be *bona fide*. No—not even the California shores of Lake Tahoe: you must remain on the Nevada side. Reno, then, really means Reno; and what comes of it?

Everyone who has lived in a college town knows the way in which “the students” are regarded as a class by themselves. “The students do this”; “the students never go there”; “the students like—or do not like—this or that.” Precisely thus in Reno are “the divorcées” referred to. “The divorcées do thus and so”; “that is for the divorcées.” What, then, is their manner of life? What are the occupations of their exile and the technique of their days? They come, a little shy and strange, and make their arrangements; they are not herded together by any social agent; there is no Beau Nash to control the society of Reno and introduce them to one another. There are no natural meeting places for lonely ladies and gentlemen: their amusements depend on their wits and their tastes.

If you are a woman desiring a divorce and resolved to obtain it in Nevada, you arrive in Reno and go to the hotel. There is more than one hotel, but one is pre-eminent. You choose your lawyer; you make your legal arrangements for freedom. If you have not decided on your “grounds” before you came, you must do it at once. Even in Nevada you have to have “grounds”;

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though almost anything will go, especially as cases are not so likely to be contested here as at home. A dissatisfied spouse, that is, does not usually absent herself from home for six months until the situation has been, at least, stated. In a large number of cases the husband must, indeed, be paying the bills. All the ladies seem to cling to their engagement rings. Some of them have plenty of money, naturally—and there are ways to spend it in Reno, even if those ways are not very inviting. But there is not much “splurge” here. Remember, as we have said, that Reno is not fashionable, and that the people with money and imagination go to Paris. Truth compels one to admit that the divorcées are on the whole a cheap-looking lot; and that the few who look expensive look peculiarly uncivilized—are apt, in fact, not even to look respectable. Some are mouselike, and some look really miserable. But generally speaking they are poor figures for drama.

The divorcée, having secured her lawyer, sits down and prepares to wear out her necessary six months. She seldom stops more than a week or a fortnight at the hotel: she immediately takes a little apartment—whether it is a flat in one of the many apartment buildings or a mere room or two in a private house. There she busies herself as best she can, in ironically domestic ways. No

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acquaintances are made in the hotel itself, which, in spite of hanging out a sign in its little lobby, "Breakfast being served" (or "lunch" or "dinner"), affects a truly metropolitan impersonality. Acquaintance, contacts come after the withdrawal to one's own lair. There are—as you would expect—both a furtive distrust and a secret freemasonry operative in the hearts of the divorcées. You are playing a lone hand in Reno; but so are the others. Gradually acquaintance forms, in apartment-house manner. You are very lonely; and in spite of your domestic duties (there are no servants to be had in Reno) you hardly know what to do with yourself, unless you have brought a companion of your own sex, or your children. There is, you see, except in the racing season, nothing whatever to do in Reno; and the Silver State Jockey Club has only two meetings a year—early summer and early autumn. Those who can afford it usually buy motor cars. But who wants to drive through the desert alone? You enter into talk with the woman in the apartment beside or below you. She too is idle and lonely. You inspect each other; you make other similar contacts; and eventually there are bridge parties and movie parties. If you dine outside your flat—and many women seem to feel that breakfast and lunch are all they

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care to get for themselves—you find a friend to go with.

Sometimes of course, as anywhere else, a man or a woman has introductions to Reno residents and may work into the settled life of the place. But for the most part acquaintance has to be made in that casual and hesitating way; and I did not discover that it is any part of a lawyer's necessary business to find friends for his clients. The social life of the residents goes on apart from the divorcées. They must get a good deal of free drama from the situations that now and then arise publicly in this town; but the divorcées are their living, not their diversion. There is no prejudice against them as a type—Reno is not so cynical as all that—but natural social law operates. You cannot fill up your personal life with birds of passage; and unless a real sympathy springs up, you let them go their own way. "Do you play bridge?" the attractive young wife of a Reno lawyer whom I happened to "meet" asked me. When I admitted a faint addiction to the game, she said, "Oh, you ought to get plenty of bridge, then. I believe the divorcées play a lot." I was not a divorcée, so far as she knew; but in spite of mild disclaimers I could never convince a Renoite that I was anything but a divorcée, actual or prospective. What else, indeed, could I be?

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There is only one reason for any Eastern woman to be in Reno.

"How do they bear six months of it? What do they *do*?" I asked myself, over and over. Reno is four thousand feet high, set in the last tumble of the Sierras. Even if you have a car, the season for driving it is not so very long. No matter how you choose your season, there must be weeks, if not months, when you cannot sit in the park, meditating above the Truckee River, or play tennis on the park courts, or drive over one pass to Virginia City or over another range to Lake Tahoe. Even if you go to the races every day while they are on—and most people do—the two meetings together do not fill up many weeks. The racing is not first-class, you understand: most of the horses are bound for no more distinguished bournes than Vancouver or Tiajuana; they will never be entered at Saratoga or Belmont Park or for the Kentucky Derby. I sampled, as in duty bound, the most exciting feature of Reno social life; went to the races, bet according to the best advice and lost my money (but who would expect a horse named "Fireplace" to win a race?), discussed the ethics of the turf with my escort, and watched the curious limited throng. You look across the race track to a lonely beautiful range of the Sierras—never had race track a lovelier setting. There

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in front of you are the boxes of the magnates; all round you are collarless farmers and their tight-lipped wives, divorcées painted and unpainted, children in arms, drifting males of every type, a few squaws with papooses on their backs, spectacled Chinamen. Everyone, male and female—except the squaws and the infants in arms—is betting. The *pari mutuel* machines during the summer meeting of the Silver State Jockey Club last year took in over two million dollars. This is Nevada, where betting is in the blood; and the divorcées bet too, up to the limits of their purses. Sometimes, alas! beyond. One woman in my hotel corridor bet all she had, lost it, and came back to face the collapse of her budget and the complete frustration of her plans. Her despair terrified the chambermaid, who came in and told me about it. But the Reno hotel is not a boarding house, and the surface of life showed no ripple.

Twenty-one days of horse racing, however, do not fill six months; and my question persisted. What do they *do*? I should never find out without being told, so I asked, respectively, a man and a woman who did not know each other. The man—a resident of Reno for years—said, "Well, to be perfectly frank, most of them take lovers." The woman—herself a divorcée—said precisely the same thing. The longer I stayed in Reno, the

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more clearly I saw that that was the answer. As there are no legitimate social distractions for the stranger in Reno—by which I mean no plays, no music, no galleries, and hardly a library—the idle, discontented human being on the verge of a complete freedom takes to pleasures that even in Reno are not considered legitimate, though they are deemed, apparently, inevitable. These women are thrown absolutely on their own resources for six months in a strange land. Many, if not most of them, lack resources within themselves. The habitual duties and relations are violently excised from their lives. In many cases they have not yet planned their futures; and in any case their futures will not lie here. They feel the freedom of the castaway, or the men and women having their last fling at a spa which they know will not cure. It is a curious, temporary, exotic interlude in life—and they are excruciatingly bored. The moral paste of which many of them are made is an inferior composition . . . and there are the same old easy and obvious temptations.

Some of them—let me say in parenthesis—have their future lives planned already. Not long before I arrived in Reno a woman had lost her head, Reno-fashion; had taken an unscrupulous lover, a doctor who permitted her to acquire the drug habit. When she was down and out, he chucked

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her—refused even to visit her in the hospital, where she was lying clad literally in the rags of charity. Public opinion was roused against the man, and in camp-and-frontier fashion they ran him out of town. But the woman? Out of her own resources she had not so much as a toothbrush left. The man she expected to marry after her decree was granted had been supporting her; and he withdrew all funds after he learned of her behavior. Someone helped her to get out of Reno—whither she went no one knew. Oh, yes, that kind of thing happens, and real Renoites do not approve any more than you or I; but they are less censorious, perhaps, and—since surprise is a necessary element in shock—they are not so shocked, being unsurprised. Luckier divorcées than such a one as this buy her jewels out of the pawnshop, and life goes on.

There are exceptions, male and female: in many the moral paste is finer and the Reno interlude is a tragically necessary one. These men and women set their teeth and bear the burden of empty, small-town days—living quietly, seeing very few people, wringing such inspirations and suggestions as they can from mere patience. But, as we were saying, of latter years Paris has welcomed the best and most fortunate of these.

A scandal can be a scandal even in Reno, as I

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have intimated. You cannot run a successful industry in these days without a semblance of virtuous management. And the management is virtuous—granted its principles. That is why Reno looks like a paradox until one has looked hard and long. There is cynicism in the Reno point of view: there is also the blessed, honest, liberty-loving West. When a certain bishop started to make trouble about easy Nevada divorces, the Reno Chamber of Commerce met for a serious session and devised ways and means to “put a stop to the bishop’s foolishness.” The home market must be protected. If Nevada adopted the New York divorce laws overnight, in six months—I should not give it more—Reno would be about as alive and prosperous, probably, as Tonopah. The University of Nevada would still sit on its hill at the far end of the town; the races might last out a year or two. But there would be very few shops and garages left, and I fancy more than one bank would fail. Reno does live on divorce: there is no use blinking the fact. Your six months’ residence must be *bona fide*—they are very stern about that. Though your grounds may be fantastic—one man accused his wife of keeping too many Persian cats and got his decree with no difficulty—grounds of a sort you must have. It is possible to eschew publicity entirely: to have your hearing

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and get your decree after hours, with none but the absolutely necessary witnesses. I know of cases where it has been done—though discreetly—and the opportunity of like privacy was definitely offered to me. But on the whole the requirements are so easy that it is not hard to keep them honestly. The divorces that are fought are the divorces one gets at home. If a woman can arrange to live in Nevada for six months, it means either that her husband is willing for her to divorce him or that he is, financially and practically, powerless to prevent her. Divorcées arrive in Reno with a lot of spade-work already done.

Those are some of the cynical aspects of the Nevada attitude. To people who take the Catholic point of view concerning marriage and divorce, all aspects of that attitude are cynical. But being, historically and prevailingly, a Protestant country, America at large accepts the fact of divorce and differs only on the procedure. You must, I think, grant that every sovereign state has a right to make its own divorce laws. There is a certain amount of agitation at present for a uniform divorce law; but it is to be hoped that American common sense will prevent such a calamity. There is no perfect divorce law, since divorces differ from one another as much as marriages do: no code can cover all cases. In Nevada they believe that they

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are acting morally in making divorce easy. They do not make it any easier, really, than some other Western states—Washington, I believe, grants divorces on as “slight” grounds as does Nevada, the difference being that it demands a longer residence in the state. Nor when I say that they believe they are acting morally, do I mean to imply the least admixture of hypocrisy. This is the Far West: strongly individualistic, unable to live in bonds, distrustful of community tyrannies, able to do without luxuries so long as it has elbow-room. These are the people who must have wide views from their windows, who cannot be choked or herded or coerced—heirs of frontier codes and adventurous attitudes.

“Why should any woman live with a man who makes her wretched?” one Reno woman asked me. She was not arguing about divorce in general: she was merely indicating, while telling me about the unhappy position of a friend of hers, that she could see no sanction in heaven or earth for undesired bondage. Oh, yes, these Reno citizens believe in easy divorce; they are subtly horrified at the notion of anyone, save a criminal, being kept in any way captive against his will. Like you or me they can censure a particular bit of human behavior; but on the principle of the thing they are absolutely fixed. The laws must be thus to protect

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people's freedom; if some people misuse the laws—well, isn't that true of all laws? "It's very decent," I mused ironically one day, concerning some quiet breaking of bonds. My companion—a very hard-boiled Nevadan—brought his fist down on the table. "Exactly!" he said. "Nevada is practically the only state in the Union where divorce *is* decent. In most states they make it so disgusting that decent people can hardly go through with it."

Even the convinced and honest Nevadan must admit that a good many of the divorces are not morally pretty, and are acquired without due regard to personal responsibilities and other people's rights. But I think he would always cling to his conviction that it was better to have the laws abused than to abolish them. Nor does he worry over abuses so much as an Easterner, simply because, being a Far Westerner, he is used to minding his own business. East of the Missouri no one minds his own business; but west of the Missouri people really do mind it. I do not mean to hold up the sovereign State of Nevada as an example of legal purism. Nor is it an especially law-abiding state. It is wild country, most of it, pretty well unredeemed to civilization. Perhaps the only laws they respect are the laws that give, not curtail freedom. They more or less ride steeplechases through the rest, I fear.

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My own position in Reno was of course anomalous. Within twenty-four hours I had to take an attitude; and it was not easy. I know of nothing more difficult than to discuss, in any detail, a divorce that you have no intention of getting. My first caller—to whom I had, indirectly, an introduction—opened conversation by saying sympathetically, "You are here for the usual reason, I suppose"—and proceeded to tell me of an apartment, providentially vacated, into which I could move within the week. Of course I did not want an apartment: I replied vaguely that I was there to look about me, to see what the place was like. "You don't mean to say, I suppose, that your getting your divorce depends on the beauties of Reno?" was his perfectly reasonable query. I could not truthfully say that it did. He was baffled, I suppose; thought me squeamish, or inferred that I was not yet sure of my intentions—perhaps, of my "grounds." Even my confession that I sometimes "wrote" started no suspicion. When I declared that I was not getting a divorce at present, I was merely urged to get it at the right season of the year, since the six months of winter are the depressing period for "residence."

I think the impression I left with a few kind residents of Reno was that of an erratic woman who did not know her own mind; who was un-

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certain, not so much about Reno as about divorcing at all: a woman with strange irrelevant curiosities—about old mining camps, prize fights, Nevada thoroughbreds, mountain scenery, dead magnates, and State universities—who thus sought surcease from perplexity and indecision. No disclaimer—not my middle-age itself—could save me from the assumption that in my own good time I should bring suit for divorce; for there were plenty of other middle-aged women in Reno. I am told that the lone female, arriving in the town, is apt to be besieged by touts for lawyers. I was not—doubtless because I was immediately provided with acquaintance, as the hotel lobby could witness. I was, I suppose, an enigma; especially after I refused the suggestion of a party at a road-house (I do not dance and was frankly determined not to experiment with Nevadan violations of the Volstead Act) and confessed that I had been, more than once, to visit the University of Nevada campus. Even on my last evening in Reno, when I was known to be taking the train presently for Salt Lake City, a judge was dragged into the hotel to make my acquaintance on the score that sometime I should be coming back to encounter him professionally. The implication was that social relations with the bench could do no harm. Again I disclaimed intentions of divorce; but so does

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Reno work upon one that even as I said my farewells, with the Overland Limited drawing into the station, I failed to disclose that chief among the "friends" I expected to see in Salt Lake was my husband. It would not have done: it would have been out of keeping. A woman may, I suppose, tarry in Reno without divorcing, but no woman leaves Reno to keep an appointment with her own husband. Moreover, there was my underlying sense of guilt: a few people had been polite to me, considerate, hospitable, and I was bringing no return—no lawyer's fees, no house rent, no grocer's bills, no bank account even. I had done nothing for the Chamber of Commerce. I had never lied to them; but I had wronged their natural expectations. . . .

I said earlier that Reno was not only dull but sinister; and I have not yet defended the latter adjective. I have tried indeed to explain that Renoites themselves are as nice as anyone else; and that though divorce, in the last analysis, gives them their livelihood, they are convinced that they are doing a moral service to the community. They are giving people their freedom—and freedom is a good thing—very cheap. The publicity, the indecency, the cruelty of divorce proceedings in most of our states really inspire in the Nevadan soul a moral horror. You may not agree with

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them, but it is not their bland good conscience that makes the atmosphere sinister. Nor is it the divorcées, poor things! They are depressing, as cheap folk making of life a cheap adventure are always depressing, but they would not suffice of themselves to make the air of this pretty town miasmatic to the spirit. I knew within a few days that my acute discomfort, my sense of being cut off from all normality, sprang from deeper sources than the divorcées. "It's the races," I said to myself at first; "when the racing crowd has gone, the town will be itself." But eventually the races were over; the horses and their human satellites departed for other meetings; and the town remained the same. Give me any hotel lobby in the world rather than a hotel lobby in Reno; give me any Main Street rather than those trim and shaded avenues, any slum rather than Commercial Row. It is the male population of Reno—not the female—that makes one hire a motor car in desperation and cross the ranges to other Nevadan desolations.

Men of Reno . . . I came very soon to capitalize them in my mind. "Men of Reno" . . . like the title of a tale—something, for quality, between Jack London and John Russell. They were the haunting horror, the poison in the town's blood. I am not speaking of the solid citizens: bankers, lawyers, merchants, and real-estate men. I speak

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of the drifting males who pace the sidewalks (you meet ten men to one woman, I think, on Reno thoroughfares), who clog the hotel lobbies, who pack aimlessly on street corners, who sit on the park benches above the Truckee River, regarding life with wandering, hostile eyes. I was in full tide of this disaffection when a divorcée told me that in four months she had never once, in daylight or after dark, had a discourteous word spoken to her by a man. That of course is the simon-pure West; and it was good hearing. I cocked my eye (we were dining together) at the other tables and the lobby just outside. I recalled a few news items in the *Reno Evening Gazette*. Aloud, I praised the West and the men of the West, harking back to old knowledge and old experience. There was no point in going into the subject with this simple soul. But I could not get rid, in my own mind, of "Gentle Alice Brown." You remember that her conscience was very tender in some matters but that she confessed with no qualms to having

. . . planned a little burglary and forged a little cheque
And slain a little baby for the coral on its neck.

The men of Nevada seemed to me, conceivably, Alice Browns. They would not be discourteous to a woman (in the streets of Reno: I fear the unpoliced desert tells another tale); but they

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might, just possibly, kill her for the cash she carried.

Let me bring other witnesses. "I don't know what these men do," said one divorcée. "They never seem to do anything. They just hang about. Of course the place is wide open, and the men gamble all the time or play the races or dabble in mining stocks. I suppose they pick up enough money to live on, somehow, but they don't seem to have any business or any work to do." Indeed, eleven o'clock in the morning or three o'clock in the afternoon seem alike to the men of Reno. There are many Italians (greatly prosperous), there are Mexican laborers, there are casual Indians, there are broken men who look as if they had once carried a solitary pick into desolate and delusive regions; but the mass of men that throng the streets of Reno are unplaceable to the normal imagination. They have not the sharpness we associate with men who live by their wits; they cannot all be hangers-on of the Silver State Jockey Club; they look as unprofessional as they do unbusiness-like; and they have no physical "points" to recommend them. They look crude without strength and shifty without sophistication. I have never, anywhere, seen so many human beings whose heads and faces seemed to have gone wrong in the modelling—all very well until suddenly a nose, a chin,

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a mouth, or some part of the skull's surface met with quick disaster. The exceptions did nothing but point the moral. Your eyes do not leap to the sight of an average human being unless they have been full-fed with the sub-average. It was absurd, the inveteracy with which one jumped to the conclusion that any average-looking male was merely waiting about for his divorce.

Lest it should seem that the divorcée and I were experiencing an essentially feminine shiver over the Men of Reno, let me quote, practically verbatim (I jotted his words down while they were fresh), a clean upstanding young son of the West, himself a ranch-bred lad, now living (and working) in Reno—a quoter of Mark Twain and a devoted admirer of the manifold colors and shapes of the high Sierras. We held much conversation while our business lasted, and to him I put the question:

“What do these men do?” I asked. “They don’t look as if they did anything.”

“No, ma’am, they don’t. Except gamble. There’s not more than a quarter of the men in Reno that work for a living.”

“Well, but they have to live. And sometimes the luck must go against them.”

“Yes, ma’am, sometimes it does, of course. Why, you can’t walk along Commercial Row with-

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out getting held up half a dozen times for a meal. But I'll tell you—luck may go against them, but they've always got an ace in the hole. Money's easy in Reno, and they can get away with things here they couldn't anywhere else. Why, while the races were on, you could—anybody could—walk into any place in town and get a drink right over the bar. There were two roulette wheels going and two faro banks, and craps everywhere—just as long as the races lasted. Of course after the races they shut them up.”

“But if everybody knew it was going on, the officials must have known.”

“Sure, they knew. But you understand—they wanted to keep all that money in town. They didn't want people to clear out.

“Do these men live in Reno all the time or come in from everywhere else?”

“Well, they maybe have to light out for a month now and then, but they come back in as soon as they can—ride in on a freight car or something.”

“And they never do anything?”

“I've seen fellows round here for years that never did a stroke of work. You understand they may get cleaned out, but they've always got an ace in the hole. Yes, ma'am, always got an ace in the hole.”

“Well, but how . . .”

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"Oh, they've always got *something*—maybe an automobile, maybe a woman. . . . Yes, ma'am, they've always got an ace in the hole. They do lose an awful lot, but they seem to go right on. They spend an awful lot and lose an awful lot."

This conversation came at the very end of my stay; but I took it for reminiscent corroboration of all that I had been feeling for a fortnight about the Men of Reno. The same lad told me—his face had lighted up enthusiastically when I spoke of the beauty of the town's situation—that he loved the place so much he could not be happy away from it for three weeks. There was nothing sinister about *him*, and he obviously disapproved of what he called "wildcat laws." He thought it, for example, distinctly wrong that a man he knew should have been allowed, only ten years ago, to put five bullets into another man on the street (causing him to lose both legs) and get off with a mere fifty-dollar fine for disturbing the peace. Yet I do not think he would be censorious like his young counterpart east of the Great Divide.

I have always regretted that my courage failed me for Goldfield, my only consolation being that I should have had to make the decision to go, almost immediately, since Goldfield burned to ashes during my stay in Reno. I hesitated because I was very much alone. If I went to Goldfield (nearly

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three hundred miles away in the desert) I should have to spend a day and a night there, whether I liked it or not; and though I should never hesitate, however solitary, to visit a mining camp during the boom period, a mining camp after the boom is over is another matter. The real people have gone, and only the desperate, the weak, and the shifty remain. No, I did not venture the long lonely trip to Goldfield. I think I probably made a great mistake. Virginia City's past is so far away now that there is nothing left by which you can recapture it. Architecture in a mining camp is a matter of board shacks without cellars—sometimes the house walls are made of old barrels ranged side by side—and the earth literally resumes it. Between Reno and Carson lies the site of a town that once held twenty thousand souls; and of the twenty thousand residents, the twelve grocery stores, and the thirty saloons, all that the eye can now detect is a dilapidated stone wall that once enclosed the cemetery. No Old Testament city detested of Jehovah ever disappeared more quickly and completely. These things have happened in other Western states—even in California. But most Western states have a present that overshadows, displaces even the recent past: they are going strong on lumber, crops, mines, or cattle. In Nevada there is very little natural wealth of

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another kind to make one forget, to re-channel the imagination for one. They had Virginia City; they had Goldfield and Tonopah; and even to-day, in the windows of Second Street in Reno, you can see the printed record of the output—staggering even to minds which the Great War has accustomed to vast arithmetic—of the Comstock Lode.

Over in Virginia City itself, when you buy soft drinks in the old Crystal Bar, you see pathetic and absurd mementos on the walls beyond the shadow of the famous and incredible chandelier: General Grant and his lady dressed to go down into the mines, chaperoned by John Mackay and Colonel Fair; James J. Corbett with a pompadour, looking (in spite of being stripped to the waist) like a Sunday-school teacher—witnesses of the great days long past. In Virginia City you expect it: it is natural piety if nothing else. But that Reno should still offer you those figures as a matter of contemporary significance seems strange—until you realize that Reno has nothing to remember and nothing to hope for save another “boom”; and that Reno fortunes, as we said, came out of Goldfield—and came rather by gambling in mines, I gather, than by digging in them.

The prominent residents of Nevada have not prevailingly been of a particularly civilized type. On the other hand, Nevada has welcomed, as tem-

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porary sojourners, all sorts and kinds. Therefore something cosmopolitan has washed off on the Nevadan metropolis; which is, I suppose, why Reno differs so subtly from other Western small towns. Its equipment for life is no better than theirs; but it has seen all sorts of people and events and is surprised at nothing. The seekers for freedom are less vital, less impressive, less interesting than the seekers for gold; yet no doubt they help to save Reno from being Gopher Prairie. But its fate is the general Nevadan fate: no one stays. The visitors vanish with their freedom as of old they vanished with their gold—both the freedom and the gold are more pleasantly squandered elsewhere. Nevada has always been, for most people, a purely temporary habitation. Therefore it is different from every other sovereign state. Reno is rather a curious isolated phenomenon than a portent or a menace.

“Say,” said the elevator girl to me one day (if I ever go back to Reno, it will be for the sake of conversing with the elevator girls), “did you see the Bowers Mansion? Gosh, I wisht I had the time to tell you about Old Man Bowers. Our family was awful intimate with the Bowers family.” And she shot upwards, chewing gum violently and adjusting her pink-chiffon dress with one hand while she operated the car skilfully with

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the other. She never did have time, friendly soul! for the whole story. But I saw the Bowers Mansion; and between manicuring and gum-chewing and the consumption of sundaes in lieu of lunch, and the eternal operating of the car, I learned that "Old Man Bowers, he made his pile off the Comstock. Back in Virginia City his wife used to take in washing and tell fortunes. Then he died; and after he died his wife she lost her money, taking advice from the other world about investments. And gosh! the place was sold for taxes, and look at it now."

The Bowers Mansion lies between Reno and Carson City and is run as a roadhouse—so far as I know, a respectable one. It accommodates Sunday-school picnics occasionally, and divorcées make up parties to lunch there. The fountain that used to run wine when Old Man Bowers entertained his friends does not even run water now; and the solid-gold doorknobs and window-fastenings have been, I believe, frugally removed. The swimming pools (hot and cold, for this is Nevada, where boiling water issues from every mountain-side) are less decorative than swimming pools would be if built by such a magnate now. But at least Old Man Bowers stuck by the source of his wealth; built his Folly where he could look at the single range that separated him from the

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Comstock Lode. The clairvoyant power that had been a financial help in Virginia City lost his widow her fortune later in the Mansion. But, luckily, Old Man Bowers had died.

At one end of Reno the University sits on a hill of its own, and you look out between buildings across perfect turf to desert foreground and the beautiful Sierras beyond. Anyone in Reno will tell you that the only money made in the Comstock Lode that has ever done any good to Nevada is Mackay money. All the others lost their fortunes or took them out of the state forever. On the campus, at the end of a vast greensward as exquisite as a bowling green, flanked on either side by birch-shaded brick walks, stands the Mackay School of Mines, and in front of it the Gutzon Borglum statue of John W. Mackay—open shirt, high boots, the left hand resting on his miner's pick, the right hand full of nuggets. The sculptor has not tried to give John Mackay any beauty or comeliness; but he has given him something that the men of Reno have not—a look, shall we say, of reality; of a preoccupation (however crude) with vital things. The big bonanza kings came and went, much as Mackay came and went; the ore of the Comstock Lode has been sifted over the whole planet; but some of the Mackay gold

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has returned to Nevada—and Nevada does not forget.

No, to understand Reno you must plumb the heart of the sovereign state of Nevada. You must understand that Nevada is no more fertile or settled for the crowds that have come to scar her soil. They have filched her mineral wealth and died or departed. Neither crops nor commerce have resulted. Yet these are the people and the frenzies that have built the tradition of the state. A mining civilization is not a civilization at all: it is temporary, feverish, uncreative. The divorcées of Reno are no more impermanent than the men who "made" and left Virginia City and later Goldfield. Yet these men have built a legend not like other legends, and Nevada's lonely and forsaken eyes still glow with romance. You might irrigate every inch of Nevada soil and turn in thousands of homesteaders; but Nevada, I fancy, would still remember, and would infallibly despise them. It is certainly not a state that is going to put barriers in the path of the adventurer: it is not going to make divorce difficult.

Reno, you may be sure, would like to be another Goldfield if it could. It never will be, since the gold is not there. But if you care to know the municipal ideals of Reno, let me record for

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you a paragraph from an editorial published in the *Reno Evening Gazette* after the Goldfield fire:

It was the last of the great mining booms, and, as the Associated Press story says to-day, Goldfield was the last of the mining boom towns. There will be others perhaps in the years to come, but there will never be another Goldfield. There was a Virginia City, and there was an Alaskan rush, with their histories and memories. Tonopah is still flourishing, with its traditions still alive. Goldfield, with its wonderful history, was a kind of combination of Virginia City, Tonopah, and Alaska all in one, and the men who lined its busy streets in the great boom from 1904 until 1909 and 1910 had come from all the world. It was a wonderful cosmopolitan gathering. There were men from Dawson and from Nome, standing talking to men from the tin mines of Malaysia and the gold depths of the Rand, or from the mines of China and the distant Ural. Bankers and financiers from every country in the world were there, too, looking for investment. Men whose names stood high in London registered at the Casey and later at the Goldfield hotel and beneath their names would be seen those of bankers who ranked high up on the bourse of Paris or that of Berlin. It was a great gathering.

That is the happy city Reno would, in her heart of hearts, like to be—not a Port Sunlight or a Spotless Town or a Brookline, Massachusetts, or a Los Angeles, California. It is reduced instead to being a divorce mart and to finding its romance in its scenery—as the divorcées apparently are reduced to being “aces in the hole” for the males so vividly characterized by my young friend.

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Being Western—though Nevadan—it does its civic duty in the matter of planting trees, making wide streets, erecting beautiful school buildings. Its provision for public entertainment is small—smaller than that made by most isolated American towns. I never quite got over wondering why. Probably, however, you must go into the recesses of the Nevadan heart to find any answer. You do not take trouble to provide yourself (or the stranger within your gates) with amusement that does not amuse you. Horse racing amuses them—and they have the meetings of the Silver State Jockey Club. Prize fights amuse them; and in their day they have had famous ones. Gambling amuses them, and good liquor—but the laws are inconvenient, evade them as you will. Religion and chautauquas do not amuse them. Books and music and pictures and plays do not amuse them—and there are none. Because the eyes of the world are upon them they must be discreet—and Reno is, as we have said, a dull town for the law-abiding visitor. Even divorce does not amuse them much: it has merely come to be the most valuable local commodity. The civilized people make their own life after the fashion of their Western kind—with much dependence on the scenery and motor cars, and on simple outdoor pleasures. But the excitement they crave is not the excitement that women's

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clubs or church sociables or a municipal entertainment committee can give them. They do not put out their hands for such pleasures.

Far out Virginia Avenue, or within the purlieus of the University, or on the lovely parked heights where a few citizens can greet both sunrise and sunset, "homes"—and, no doubt, quiet—prevail. But down in the town people talk all night in the streets. I never woke, at any hour, without hearing conversation under my windows. Probably there are always some of the men of Reno who have not, at the moment, a place to lay their heads. And of course night is the best time for shooting craps in dark alleys. Curious little Reno! So pretty, so uneventful, so isolated—so very "small-town"—yet so manifestly linked to a brilliant and lawless past; and bearing for all eyes in the broad light of day the light flotsam of divorcées, the heavy jetsam of shifty, broken men.

Chapter Six

SAN FRANCISCO REVISITED

SOME months ago an editor on the Coast had a clever idea. He suggested that San Francisco and Los Angeles should exchange star reporters for a week, and let each tell the truth about the other place—thereby permitting the two cities to “get it out of their systems once for all.”

The results were—as they were meant to be—amusing. Especially amusing were the comments of the Los Angeles man on San Francisco. Let me quote a few of them, so that we can orient ourselves:

“San Francisco has charm . . . delicacy and flavor . . . imagination . . . San Francisco sips at strange and alluring liquors . . . San Francisco is wise and subtle old age.”

“San Francisco is the most sophisticated city in the country. From prize-fights to grand opera, it is nearly always in good taste—yes, and has delicacy. A San Francisco audience is a test of a good play. As a matter of fact, a New York audience is no test at all. New York is the champion

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boob town of the world; just as San Francisco is the most astute."

"I can see power and vigor in the artistic blunders of Los Angeles—decay in the charm of San Francisco . . . San Francisco has shades and subtleties and delicacies lacking in Los Angeles. But these qualities you get as you leave the splash and roar of youth behind you."

You cannot discuss San Francisco fairly until you realize that it strikes a great many people—not simply the young man from Los Angeles—as being an old, not a new city; a sophisticated, civilized, complicated place. It does it, not by being old—for it is a joke to call San Francisco old—but by having acquired traits and qualities that usually go with age. Histories vary—whether of towns or people. A man or a woman can have a "past," though he or she be short of thirty. So can a city. It depends on how early the town began to live, and what sort of experience it packed into its salad days.

They probably mean that history has been speeded up in San Francisco; that it has lived through cycles while Cleveland, Ohio, and Indianapolis, Indiana—both places with some fame of their own—have been moving more demurely towards their goal. It took Utah more than forty years to become a state of the Union. But con-

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sider a few Californian dates. In 1846 the population of Yerba Buena—before 1835 it had neither name nor existence—numbered upwards of two hundred. In 1847 it became San Francisco, and had about fifty houses. By 1849, they were framing a constitution for California, and accusing Congress of delays. In 1850, they were electing a mayor and common council in San Francisco, instead of an *alcalde* and an *ayuntamiento*, and later in the year they were celebrating the admission of California into the Union. Truly, as the annalist of 1855 remarks, “In business and in pleasure, the San Franciscans were *fast* folk; none were faster in the world. Their rents, interest on money, doings and profits, were all calculated *monthly*. A month with them was considered equal to a year with other people. In the former short time men did such deeds, and saw, felt, thought, suffered, and enjoyed as much as would have lasted over a twelvemonth in other lands.

“But then these were really *men*—giants, rather—the very choice of the cleverest, most adventurous and hard-working people of America and Europe. California was a hotbed that brought humanity to a rapid, monstrous maturity, like the mammoth vegetables for which it is so celebrated.”

People mean also, I think, that the very elements of life in San Francisco have been different;

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that it has been, from its start, more aware of the planet, more avid of varied experience than most American towns. Whatever the cause of the impression, it is important for us to realize, and admit at the outset, that San Francisco affects people as does no other city in the country except New York. With that possible exception, it is the only American city that people talk about and judge and delight in as if it were Paris or London or Rome—one of the capitals of civilization. Nor is this simply a case of California talking about itself; though California does talk about itself in no uncertain terms.

"They've hypnotized the rest of the country into thinking 'California' on any product means it's *hors concours*," folk grumble in the Puget Sound region. "They've put it over on everybody, just by bragging, in and out of season."

"I tell you," said the gentleman from Wyoming in the observation car, "Californians are all snobs. You don't amount to anything unless you're a 'native son.' Not in San Francisco, you don't." The group gathered round him—all Far Westerners—agreed. "Of course," he went on, grinning, "if they find you really do amount to something, they turn you into a 'native son' mighty quick."

"There are only two real cities in the United States," said a very charming person—name un-

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known—with whom I chanced to have dinner while crossing the Sierras. "One is New York, and one is San Francisco. The rest are just towns—very nice ones, some of them, but not cities at all." He himself was a thorough-going Easterner with the usual European background; so much I discovered.

"No, I wasn't born here," said an old friend, whose westward path chanced to cross my eastward path at the Golden Gate. We were making briskly for Portsmouth Square, where Stevenson's little galleon has long since displaced the gallows of the Vigilance Committee; and he flung up his head to breathe the incomparable air. "I'd rather have been born in ——" (he named his exotic birthplace) "than anywhere else in the world; but, thank God, San Francisco was the first American soil my feet ever touched!"

Only a day or two ago a friend told me of the husband of a kinswoman who lay ill in San Francisco, to whom a change of climate had been suggested as possibly hastening recovery. Stout refusal was his reply. "I'd rather die in San Francisco than live anywhere else," was how he disposed of the matter. *He*, I believe, was an Englishman.

It is not just California talking about itself. Southern California talks far more than Marin

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or San Mateo county, and no one on the Pacific coast pays any attention. But in Salt Lake City, Reno, Seattle, and Albuquerque, the eyes of the civilized shine at mention of San Francisco. People may prefer to winter in Santa Barbara for warmth, but that is different. San Francisco is, like Paris, a home of the spirit. That is a fact one has to reckon with. You cannot discuss it as you would discuss Philadelphia, or Chicago, or St. Louis. It is not, like all our other big towns, a provincial capital, deriving its charm from its unique provincial flavor. Surpassed in size by so many other cities, it is yet—as we said—a capital of the world, not of any province. And when they pity you discreetly for not being a “native son,” you incline for the moment to wish that you were. You feel, that is, the validity of the term, the value of their inheritance.

It is worth remembering, perhaps, since we are sifting social values, that the “Society of California Pioneers” was organized in 1850, even before California celebrated its admission to statehood. Recalling the complaints of the man from Wyoming, one is tempted to quote (as it were, for his retrospective comfort) the requirements for membership:

The society “shall be composed of native Californians, foreigners resident in California previous

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to the conquest; and natives of other States and other countries, if citizens of the United States, resident here prior to January 1st, 1849, and their male descendants, who shall constitute the *first class*; and citizens of the old States of the Federal Government who shall have resided in California prior to January 1st, 1850, and their male descendants, who shall constitute the *second class*; and honorary members, who may be admitted in accordance with what may be prescribed in the by-laws."

Considering that Rosalie Leese, who first saw the light in 1838, was the first child to be born in Yerba Buena, one must admit that clan-consciousness and state-consciousness were not slow about developing in the Californian heart. We recall inevitably the tardy nineteenth century formation of Colonial Dames and Daughters of the Revolution and the like; and cannot but note that California pride was born *with* California. As soon as they were well inside the Golden Gate they saw that they were going to be ancestors to be proud of, and saved their descendants the trouble of arranging for their glorification.

The elements out of which grew San Francisco, in contrast to the insignificant Yerba Buena which it supplanted in the late 'forties, do not seem, at first blush, wholly to account for the difference be-

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tween this and other American cities. Yet, perhaps, taken rightly, they do. One fact certainly cannot be blinked: that it was a very cosmopolitan throng which raised its tents and shacks on the peninsula in the early 'fifties. On May 6th, 1850, thus wrote Richard Hale of Newburyport, Massachusetts:

"There it (San Francisco) lies! but with all the glamour our wildest enthusiasm can paint it, it is yet only an uninviting stretch of waste land, and sandbanks. On we go, dodging our way into a harbor of which we can see but little, it is so thickly covered with sails, and hulks of all descriptions;—every cut of sail, and every shape of spar surrounds us. There must be close to a thousand vessels at anchor in the bay . . . Our brig is surrounded by a fleet composed of every grade, and every rig of vessel, representing every nation that has deep-water craft. Many strange tongues call from stranger-garbed crews;—a Tower of Babel, with the key to the spirit of all the chaos in the one word, 'Gold'!"

"Every nation that has deep-water craft." Less of an hyperbole, probably, than such wild statements are wont to be. We know, at all events, that California drew men from all over the civilized world. The statistics of the early 'fifties are astonishing, no less, in their inclusiveness. Only

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the Americans—and not a large proportion of them—went overland; and of those who did, the ill-equipped and physically unfit (a large number) perished. It is not our business to evoke even so thrilling a chapter of American history as is constituted by the development of California into a state of the Union, a social entity and a political consciousness. But we had best not forget those “hulks of all descriptions.” Point Lobos was no Plymouth Rock; Washington on the Potomac was as far away as Peking; and Yerba Buena had so insignificant a Spanish past that to this day historians cannot decide whether the settlement was ever entitled to be called a pueblo.

You must go farther south to feel, nowadays, the backwash of Spain. The gold, of course, was inland. Babel was the point of departure and the point of repair—and, incidentally, one of the finest seaports in the world. Moreover, California was no Klondike. Of all our planet’s gold fields, it offered, when “the tumult and the shouting died,” the most compensations, the richest alternatives. There was every temptation to spend your pile where you had made it—not scurry hot-foot to a better place. At worst, when the gold went back on you, you had the climate. To quote the elegant annalist of 1855 once more: “Besides these (English, Scotch, and Irish), there were

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always arriving numerous specimens of most other European nations—Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians, Swiss, Greeks, Hungarians, Russians, Prussians, Dutch, Swedes, Danes—Turks, too—all visited California. . . . The country and city were wide enough to hold them all, and rich enough to give them all a moderate independence in the course of a few years.”

Yes, California has had luck—and, of course, the detrimental that follow luck about the world. But it had also men like James Lick; who not only knew a good thing when they saw it but were capable of deep and wise loyalty to the source of their fortunes. “San Francisco was, and yet is,” says the loyal annalist (in 1855!), “the very antipode of patriarchal simplicity.” San Francisco was the metropolis of the Coast; and for many years the bonanza kings built their gorgeous flimsy mansions there before they assailed the East and Europe. One went, in the 'sixties, from Virginia City to New York *via* San Francisco. And all that, the city has folded into its past. No crowd, they tell us, is so cosmopolitan as the crowd of a gold rush, wherever or whenever. That one can well believe. But here that cosmopolitan crowd found inducements to root itself: an incomparable climate, beauty that precluded nostalgia,

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a strategic position, and all sorts of natural resources other than the precious metals.

They stayed; they blended; they made a city of widely differing creeds, desires, and aptitudes. New England was there, in its numbers, tending as usual to pride itself on its moral influence; yet this was not preponderatingly a swarm out of our own East and Middle West, with mere sectarian quarrels, and the red Indian for common foe. Nearly every race and creed was there; and tolerance was born perforce. San Francisco, as we all know, had its bitter and brutal days. We must not forget the "Hounds" of 1849, the grim necessity for the Vigilance Committee of 1851, the "Sydney Coves" who pestered the town—killing, looting, burning. Later it had its sand-lot fights and its prejudices that expressed themselves in slaughter. But never at any time was it a little colony of the like-minded, resenting the intrusion of some one who held different ideas about baptism or negro slavery. As so often in our Far West, decent citizens had to band together to defy the criminal class; but those decent citizens of the Vigilance Committee were not all Smiths. They were Kuhlmanns, and Schutzes, and Fourgeauds, and Deblois, and Cazneau, and Von Lenyee, and van Bokkelen, and Argenteis, and Del Vecchios, and Eagans, and McCahills—and "James

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King of William," whoever he may have been.

So much history must be hinted at to show why, to-day, San Francisco is more cosmopolitan than any other of our cities save New York or Chicago. Correctly speaking, it is more cosmopolitan even than New York, since New York's foreign population is nowadays preponderatingly of one race. In San Francisco the Frenchman, the Spaniard, the Italian, the Irishman, the Scandinavian, the German, the Chinaman are all gathered together; but none overwhelms. It is a subtler and more varied blend. You encounter all types on the city streets—not, as in New York it sometimes seems, only two: the "hick" and the Jew.

The reforming citizen in our country seems to be divided between two theories: the theory that you can Americanize anyone overnight, making the Jew and the Italian indistinguishable the next day; and the theory that Americans, being singularly unprovided with wit or charm or æsthetic sense, ought to sit at the feet of the alien and learn all these things of him. The problem is one of assimilation, of course; and having for a long time let in everyone, we are faced, on our eastern seaboard, with a heterogeneous crowd that it would take a hundred years to lick into citizen shape. We put up the bars too late, as everyone knows; and neither the Americanizing enthusiasts nor the

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devotees of the alien's charm can possibly get their own way. San Francisco, like New York, is a great seaport; but one must never forget the fact that it looks upon the Pacific, not upon the Atlantic. It is a very long way from Europe, and to get there from Europe means either more money or more stamina than the average immigrant possesses. It is not, like New York, the near gateway to the coal mines, the steel mills, the packing houses, the clothing factories of our industrial East. It is not even the paradise of the huckster. They sell flowers on Kearny Street—not junk or old clothes; and no one turns into a millionaire by selling flowers at street corners.

The Latin races, we are always told, know better than the Anglo-Saxon how to get pleasure out of life in simple and legitimate ways. The average Anglo-Saxon American, who has derived in the main from the English Puritan, is, I fancy we should all admit, a comparatively joyless creature. Energetic, ambitious, mightily industrious and generally conscientious he has prevailingly been—bar the aberrations that have resulted from the exhilaration of a new country—but no one can say that he has had a gift for pleasure or that he takes his pleasures attractively. He is content to the end of his days with the kind of food he was brought up to, the kind of amusement that

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neither arouses nor satisfies any curiosity, the kind of manners that may fit his ethical sense but omit any reference to beauty. His imagination tends to dwell on how far his car will go on a gallon of gasoline or how distant may be the station he can "listen" to on his radio. It is trite—too trite, indeed, to say—but it is none the less true that the American man has been so busy making money in exciting ways that he has no mental energy left for other excitements. His thrill has come from his business.

Business in itself is less thrilling in older countries, where chances are fewer; and certain foreign peoples have learned to apportion their capacity for excitement more neatly. It is quite possible to learn from the Frenchman, the Spaniard, the Italian, the German, many things about simple pleasures. San Francisco, from the very nature of its population, has learned much. It knows about food and drink—for since 1849 it has tasted many kinds and educated its palate. It knows about the arts because its social consciousness has not been conditioned by the Puritan limitations. It has an incomparable landscape, and it has learned how to get pleasure out of it. Its attitude to parks and public places is the Latin attitude. It may be led astray into building an amazing civic centre; but after all San Francisco is thoroughly

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American, a bidder for national conventions and a compiler of municipal statistics. Nor does one desire it otherwise, since one wishes it to survive against all competition.

But there is this much of truth in the statements of the gentleman from Los Angeles: that San Francisco was sophisticated in its very cradle. "San Francisco was certainly a great city (let us listen, one last time, to the faithful annalist); and its people had great notions; their deeds of business and amusement were all great in their way. The large admixture of foreign races . . . tended to give a pleasant, gay aspect to the city. The grave national character of the United States men was converted into levity and cheerfulness by the example and sympathy of their merry neighbors." Unlike most American cities, it had no modest beginnings: almost from the moment that San Francisco existed, "wealth, gayety and luxury characterized her people." None of us would choose, in all probability, the San Francisco of the early 'fifties to live in; we should, no doubt, prefer safer places, with cleaner streets, fewer gambling resorts, and more domestic centres. It was emphatically not a city of homes, since it was a city, chiefly, of unmarried men under forty. But it was not only the "Sydney Cove"—the ticket-of-leave man and the convict who had served his

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time—who rushed to the inception of this commonwealth. Culture, art, and learning also felt the lure of gold; and when they left the diggings with lame backs and bleeding hands, they reverted in San Francisco to more natural labors.

All these things, as we said, must be kept in mind if one is to account for San Francisco as she is to-day: for her pride and the reason of her pride; for her very definite though very subtle effect on the non-San Franciscan.

They are building furiously in San Francisco at present—over-building, one almost feels, in the absence of anything (as far as we could learn) like a boom. At the same time, one must realize that there may well be a perfectly normal flux of population back to the city proper, away from the surrounding country. As everyone knows, the earthquake and fire of 1906 mark a definite turning-point in the city's history. Nob Hill was never Nob Hill again, in the same sense; and a few blackened débris of walls and foundations are still, after all these years, to be seen in the better sections. The residents simply did not rebuild. The exodus to the country—so marked, with the advent of the automobile, in Eastern cities like Boston and Philadelphia—was accelerated and increased in San Francisco by the disaster. A few magnates, like the Spreckels

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family, stayed by the town; but San Mateo and Alameda and Marin counties received many of them—especially, of course, San Mateo and Burlingame. On the other hand, San Francisco has been fortunate in that her industrial and manufacturing section (except for that desolate transmission region of the Potero and South San Francisco) lies across the Bay, a ferry-length away, in Oakland.

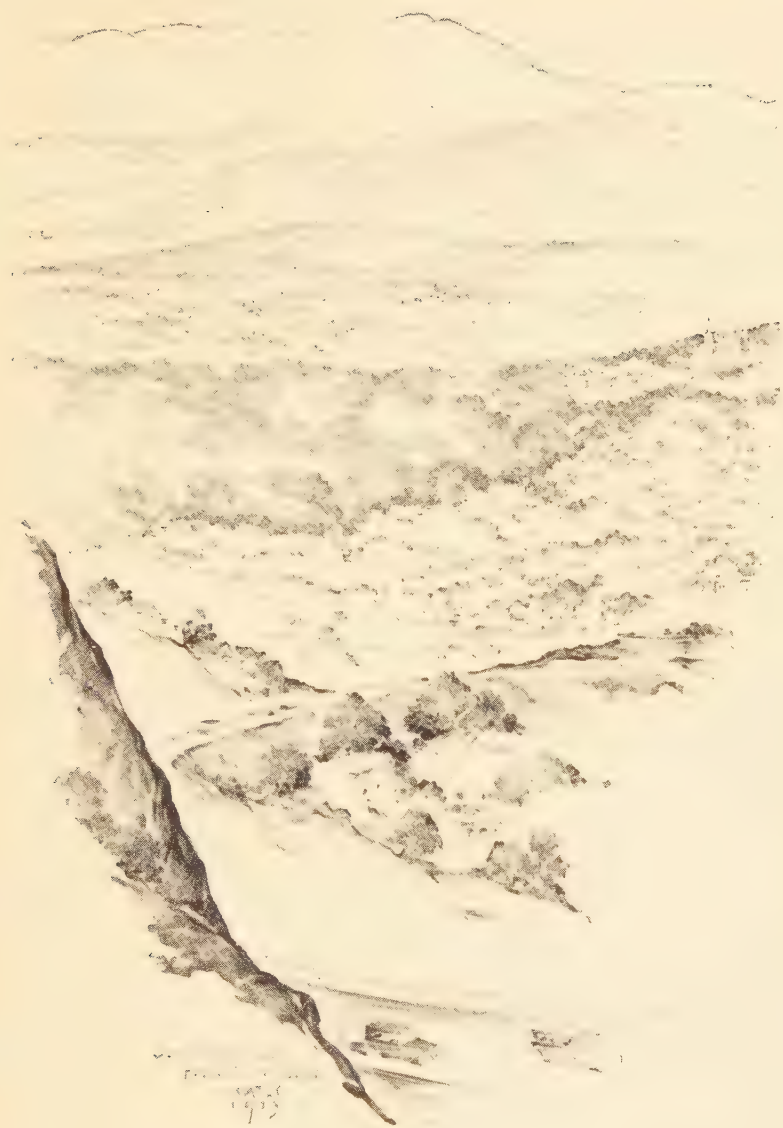
True, you see mansions on Pacific Heights for sale—their owners have probably entrenched themselves behind terraced and fountained gardens down the peninsula—but there is much new building on Russian Hill; and St. Francis Wood, over beyond the Twin Peaks, and the divinely beautiful stretch of littoral between the Presidio and Lincoln Park (Sea Cliff, by name) are both, residentially speaking, quite new. And Russian Hill and Sea Cliff, as sites for homes, are infinitely better than Nob Hill ever was, or than Pacific Heights is now. An “unobstructible view” is a marvellous thing; and when, as at Sea Cliff, you are set down on the very edge of the ocean, and own the whole tumble of rock and earth down into the very waves of the Pacific—so that none can ever take from you the vision of the Golden Gate, the open ocean, and the rose-pink mountains of Contra Costa opposite you—you are willing to

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pay a great deal of money for your lot, if the money is to be had. Enchanting houses, part Italian, part Spanish, rise on these delectable sites.

On Russian Hill the ground drops steeply all about you, and you look over roofs, far below, to Alcatraz Island and the Berkeley shore. At Sea Cliff, you wall your little garden with glass to fend off the sea-winds, and sit in a hooded bath-chair among the giant pansies. The fact of the automobile can work both ways—making it easy for you to dwell within the city limits, as well as bringing the country nearer. True, there are all sorts of hills to be negotiated in San Francisco, but cable-cars run up and down most of them, and no self-respecting automobile—not even a Ford—objects to an angle of forty-five degrees on an asphalted street. It is only in the East, anyhow, that people worry about their cars. In the West, cars are expected to climb up walls and leap across *arroyos*—and to the everlasting credit of their makers be it said, these things cars do without complaint.

The Great War taught us all many unexpected things. It taught the War Department, I believe, that the Presidio is not, strategically speaking, much good. As an emplacement for defensive artillery, it is pure waste of territory. Coast guns would do better if well outside the Golden Gate.



From Twin Peaks the city stretches
away to the mountains

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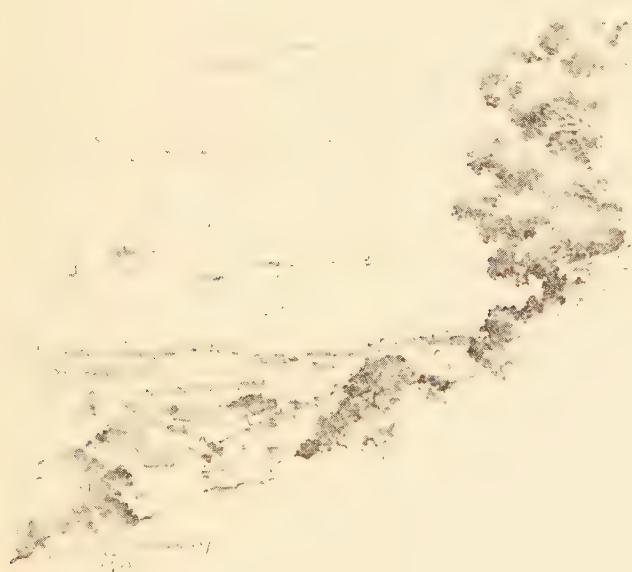
It is being rumored about that the Presidio may be given up as a military reservation. Those fifteen hundred acres of hill, cliff, and shore would in that case be available, presumably, for residential purposes. The magnificent stretch of shore frontage that Seattle boasts on Lake Washington and on Puget Sound itself would then be inconsiderable in comparison, whatever the linear totals. For God never made but one San Francisco Bay; nor has Puget Sound, lovely though it is, the beauty of the open Pacific off central and southern California.

The resumption of the Presidio by the civil power, if that ever comes, will be all to the good, since it would presumably be devoted to public parks and private houses. But one ought, in all justice, to mention another project which is being widely discussed. In all justice to the rest of the American world, that is; since it proves that San Franciscans, too, are prone to some of the worst American faults. The project is nothing less than the bridging of the Golden Gate; the excuse for it being that such a bridge would make Marin county more accessible as a residence district for the city. No Sausalito ferry any more; instead, an endless chain of motor-cars moving antlike across a Golden Gate bridge. . . . Some people have tried to take heart of grace from the assurance

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that a bridge so high and so long as it would of necessity be is not practicable. However, I believe engineers now say that it can be done. The expense is another matter. One must hope, for the credit of San Francisco, that the project will never be put through. When you have one of the most romantic approaches in all geography, why spoil it? Let the landowners of lovely Marin county stew in their own juice. Make the Sausalito ferry a "floating palace"; beguile the half-hour journey with every vulgar pleasure; subsidize the commuters, if necessary; but in the interest of your own uniqueness, dear San Francisco, do not bridge the Golden Gate. Leave that kind of gesture to Los Angeles—which, if it had a Golden Gate, would most certainly bridge it, and sink oil wells into bay and ocean on either side of the bridge.

My own acquaintance with San Francisco has, unluckily, never been profound; but it stretches over a good many years. I knew it first before the earthquake, when the historic Palace Hotel was still existent; when Nob Hill was crowned with the mansions of magnates who had had very bad luck in architects; when Chinatown was still Chinatown and sank six stories underground; when, by paying a guide, the tourist could behold in the depths of the earth yellow ladies chained



God never made but one
San Francisco Bay

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in opium dens; when the Eye of God glared at one from the dome of the incredible chapel of Stanford University. In all essentials, the atmosphere of San Francisco was then what it is now: a city where the man in the street looked not only alert but happy; where the very fogs were stimulating; where food and drink were exquisite as well as cheap; where many races lived together in mutual tolerance.

California's anti-Oriental prejudices, to be sure, have expressed themselves more than once in undesirable ways; and there would be no point here in going into the anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese campaigns. In this matter the Californians have not been, one judges, any more logical than Americans are wont to be. Having practically driven the Chinese out, they are all now wishing the Chinaman back, and more or less lamenting the laws they forced on the country. They have behaved badly about the Japanese; and if they lost him—he is perhaps too clever to be lost if he does not wish to be—they would probably want *him* back. Chinatown, naturally, is not what it used to be before the earthquake and fire. One misses the jewellers working under torchlight at infinitesimal things, the musician with his dulcimer, the gamblers' tributes heaped high before the white-clad goddess of Luck and Mourning.

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Now, the girls who wait on you in shops speak perfect high-school English, and click away at typewriters in between. A great many shop signs indicate the newer political trend in the Middle Kingdom. (My own favorite was the "Republican Noodle Factory," on—I think—Stockton Street.) You may not find your favorite Poodle Dog restaurant where it was the last time you were there; but you will find something else as good, somewhere, and the base of Telegraph Hill is as Latin as it ever was.

The Barbary Coast has changed since the Panama-Pacific Exposition; and the ladies have been more or less ousted by bootleggers, I believe. You cannot keep liquor away from such a foggy coast as the Pacific any more than you can prevent a large Latin population, in a vine-growing region, from making its own light wines. The wine is as harmless as ever, I gather, though it naturally costs more. Neither seaboard, of course, is ever going to be "dry"; and "prohibition" can be absolutely forced only on the poor. I never saw anyone drunk in San Francisco, but I feel sure that the clubman does not go without his Scotch, or the French or Italian *bourgeois* without his glass of light California wine. What terrific stuff they may get in the sailors' hotels along the Embarcadero I do not know. San Francisco

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is not, to be sure, so easily provided as Seattle, which has only to fetch home what it wants from Victoria in a golf bag or a suit case. Prohibition seems to worry people less in the Far West, anyhow; perhaps because they are less given to worry in general, perhaps because they have fewer prohibition agents. There is less sordid stewing about it than at home. Politically, there is not much to be said for any section of our country at the present time; but there seems to be a little more natural dignity among citizens in the Far West than elsewhere.

San Francisco has a population of about six hundred and fifty thousand: it is only twelfth in size among our cities. It must be remembered, however, that San Francisco *is* San Francisco; it has not gobbled all the other towns near at hand—not even Oakland and Berkeley across the bay. Los Angeles says that it would like to, but that the other towns are too canny for it. San Francisco, if it retorts at all, retorts by making fun of Los Angeles' determination—being twenty miles from the ocean—to be a seaport, even if it has to grab everything between it and the sea to justify its claim. Usually, however, San Francisco does not bother about back talk, and looks at Los Angeles, if at all, through an opera glass. Six hundred and fifty thousand may leave San

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Francisco only twelfth in population; but anyone who is familiar with our industrial cities farther east knows that you can have pretty bad slums with a population of only fifty thousand. Any great seaport is going to have a fairly disreputable quarter close to the shipping. The streets directly behind the Embarcadero are not particularly attractive, though they soon fade into the colorless respectability of a mere warehouse and wholesale section.

If you are frankly looking for the San Francisco slums, the best you can do is to come up the peninsula from the south, through South San Francisco (where the big Southern Pacific shops are) into and through the Mission District, which is the poorest quarter. What you are finally forced to conclude is that there are no slums, in our familiar sense. The little wooden shacks, the flimsy tenement houses, are somehow open to the free air of the sea and the bay, and to the blue sky; there is room somewhere, always, for children to play; flowers are never totally out of your vision. Mean and comfortless, no doubt, many of the houses are; but they are not great, grim, brick prisons, and no one has to get air, enjoyment, and adventure on a fire-escape. There is a gay lack of uniformity about the poorer quarters; some of the little houses are absurd, but at least they are

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not like their neighbors. One cannot enter Philadelphia on the Pennsylvania Railroad from New York without being infinitely depressed by the terrible square miles of North and West Philadelphia, where a single little red brick house seems to have spawned a million others, and all seem to be fixed forever, an agglutinated mass with perhaps a corporate, but certainly no individual life.

I defy you to be depressed by the Mission district of San Francisco. The mere fact that the two greatest enemies of the poor—extreme heat and extreme cold—are unknown here, makes an almost incalculable difference. They never have either to freeze or to swelter for poverty's sake. The tonic, unchanging air is free to all, and they have room to breathe it. You see no pale puny children in the poorer streets of San Francisco. As much as their governessed coevals over on Pacific Avenue or the Camino del Mar, they look sturdy, big, and radiant. No extremes of heat or cold to encounter; room to breathe in; the wages of labor high and the necessities of life cheap—these preclude the worst kinds of suffering. It may be said by some that poverty loses its worst features here simply because San Francisco is not big enough to be overcrowded; but that argument is of little worth in face of the slum conditions that prevail in the much smaller

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manufacturing towns of New England and the Middle States. There are not Jews enough to make a ghetto; or negroes enough to make a colored quarter; or "hunkies" enough to create the particular kind of hell that exists in the environs of the big coal mines and steel mills. But there are plenty of European Latins and Hispano-Americans—only they do not seem to make slums. Perhaps there are slums in Oakland; frankly, I have never investigated. I can, however, bear witness that the worst by-products of poverty do not exist, in any noticeable degree, in San Francisco.

No one, of course, would pretend that San Francisco is a home of all the virtues. San Franciscan politics have been at times notorious, even for the United States; and as far as one can make out, the state machine has been as bad as anything in Pennsylvania, even if not so bad as New Mexico. Californians, too, have lost their heads, and listened when the demagogue piped to them. Strong-arm methods are not unknown out by the Golden Gate. Only last summer the proprietor of the only good newspaper in San Francisco was suing the proprietors of two other papers for beating up his newsboys and sending thugs into his composing room to destroy the type. Did we not say that California was intensely American? It is not in

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purser politics that we must look for evidences of their superiority. One does, however, come to wonder if they do not take their politics—whether the corrupting or the purifying kind—more lightly than some of the rest of us. When things get too bad, they will clean them up; meanwhile, life is the important thing, and their consciences have perhaps a keener edge on the social than on the political side.

The Chamber of Commerce (which ought to know) says officially that San Francisco is the first city in the United States in *per capita* wealth; which can only mean that the bulk of the population is better off here than elsewhere, since San Francisco could hardly compete with the larger cities in the number of multi-millionaires. Certainly they give the impression of living more comfortably, of getting more pleasure out of life, of being in better tune with the scheme of things than the throngs of any other streets I know. There is no violent and vulgar display; but—to make for the moment a purely feminine comment—the women of San Francisco are better dressed, better groomed, and, as far as looks can decide the matter, better bred than the women of any other American city. Nor is it all the bloom of climate, the magnificent physique with which California seems to endow her children.

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They have the best shops in the country—an opinion corroborated by women who have shopped far more variously and luxuriously than I. It is quite possible for a woman to wander up Fifth Avenue without her sartorial passions kindling—but not up Geary or Post Street. Also, with the possible exception of shoes, everything seems to be cheaper than in the East.

“Why should I shop in New York?” one’s Californian friends ask. “In New York I am busy seeing my friends and going to plays. Those are the things New York is good for. The shops are much better here.” So, one must admit, are the manners of all people who are paid to deal with the public; perhaps because self-respect must precede good manners, and the blend of personal dignity and natural kindness is a specialty of the Far West. Personally I think New York (publicly speaking) a kindly place, though rather hurried and harassed. I would far rather encounter any of the slight mischances of travel or business in New York than in Boston or Philadelphia or Washington. As for Chicago: the only people in Chicago who will give a civil answer to a civil question are the people who cannot inform you—strangers like yourself. The official orders of the Chicago conductor, policeman, and the like are evidently to reply to all interlocutors in the brutal

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terms of insult. Chicago, I believe, is always complaining that Easterners consider her—erroneously—Western. Only those Easterners who have never known the West would make the mistake; for bad manners are a typically Eastern vice, and Chicago has the worst public manners in the East.

Pollyanna is the most tiresome of companions, and I do not mean to imply that San Francisco is cheerful in any objectionable sense. Theirs is not an aggressive or an interfering optimism. I have known the reserved Easterner to dread, beforehand, the expansiveness of the Far West; to fear too much informality, too much easy intimacy in trains, hotels, and places of resort. The dread soon gave way to amused perception of its absurdity. The Far Westerner lets you more severely alone—unless something cries out to be done for you—than any of his fellow citizens. He seems to read a more complicated meaning into the word “integrity” than we; feeling in it not only moral worth, but that completeness of the human being which implies separateness, self-sufficiency, privacy. Certainly, in the West, you are more your own toad than here at home. The old frontier law of asking no questions of any man still persists in this softened form. Many Western virtues, indeed, are derived from the frontier

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code, adapted to civilization but keeping certain moral estimates unaltered.

The moulding effect of the frontier conditions and the frontier code must not be forgotten in any reading of Western values. Great personal dignity and a very spontaneous kindness have been the moral heritage of the sons and grandsons of Pacific pioneers. We are all used to the "big-hearted, breezy Westerner" of tradition. Big-hearted I think he is; but the San Franciscan is certainly both too reticent and too sophisticated to be "breezy"—if to be breezy means to be intrusive and uncontrollable like the wind.

Sophistication itself is a subtle thing to define. The first requisite for real sophistication, I take it, is a certain intellectual independence, a private *flair* for what is "good" that disdains to follow the commoner canons of taste. No one who is slavishly dependent on any group of intelligentsia can be called really sophisticated; for taste must be not only educated but free. The sophisticated person knows what he likes; he does not have to be told. The San Franciscan is brought up with many things that other Americans have to go to Europe or Asia to discover. To breathe a cosmopolitan atmosphere from your birth precludes forever one kind of ignorance. It is like being bi-lingual or tri-lingual from your cradle.

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San Franciscans have always before them not only American ideals of liberty, but the Latin conception of the art of living, the German knowledge of music, the carvings and broideries of the subtle Orient, the Spanish architecture in their eyes and the Spanish terms in their ears. It may be a small matter; yet we ourselves were never able to imagine the average New York or Boston car-conductor twisting his tongue round "change at Devisadero" or "this car for Balboa and Cabrillo." He would have—for personal vanity if nothing else—to Anglicize such names unrecognizably. In most places, the Embarcadero would have turned to Front Street or Water Street long since. There is no tourist-begotten tendency here, as farther south, to be affectedly Spanish. Spain is only a part of San Francisco's mixed heritage. But it does not occur to the man in the street that it is beneath his dignity to pronounce Spanish names correctly. San Francisco has not the general American scorn of Europeans, for Europeans were among her prominent citizens from the beginning; and (apart from the Oriental and the negro) race-distinctions were in no sense class-distinctions, as they have usually been in the East. The famous Bohemian Club of San Francisco is, I suppose, the most sophisticated association of its kind in the country. No man who has

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been a guest at their High Jinks up on the Russian River ever ceases to recall the experience. The Bohemian Club and its ways and works took Rudyard Kipling's breath away in the late 'eighties. What struck him most was—but let him speak for himself: "There was a slick French audacity about the workmanship of these men of toil unbending that went straight to the heart of the beholder. And yet it was not altogether French. A dry grimness of treatment, almost Dutch, marked the difference. The men painted as they spoke—with certainty."

What one chiefly wonders, with all the evidence of taste and knowledge spread before one, the intelligence displayed in almost every field of living—corroborative detail of every kind: the houses of Green Street and the Camino del Mar, the excellent bookshops, the perfect ivories (for a price!), the strange and exquisite foods, the distinguished bearing of men and women, all the special catering, London or Paris fashion, to special and subtle needs, the prima donnas (Tetrazzini or another) singing on Christmas Eve to a hundred thousand people in Union Square, the almost faun-like gayety of children, from Pacific Heights to the Mission, the opera, the orchestral season, the play—is why California has on the whole given proportionally so little that is first-

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rate to the literary and artistic world. The fact is, one suspects, that only long habit or grimmest necessity could make one stick to pen and brush or instrument in that divine air. They are too fortunate to be more than splendid amateurs.

"Intellectual work," mused one learned gentleman, "is best done in bad weather, when there are no temptations to do anything else. There isn't any bad weather here, to speak of, the year through; and there is temptation to go outside three hundred and sixty-five days in the year." Certain it is that to produce first-rate stuff one must be a slave of the lamp. Most human beings do not resign themselves to that servitude except when circumstances contribute strongly to their enslavement. "Here one could work forever," the Easterner sighs; forgetting the fact that, except for financial reasons, few people work when they can play instead. Where the art of living has been highly developed, it has not been the aristocrats themselves but their sycophants and dependents who have toiled to immortalize their art of living in prose or verse, or paint or marble. In a democracy there is no gifted retinue attendant on a magnate. The people who might constitute it are busy flattering him in the sincerest way—by imitating him.

We have been trying to determine what the

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annalist meant when he said San Franciscans were the fastest people on earth. Fast they were in making up their minds overnight what they wanted, and getting it almost immediately. The building of San Francisco into a city, the acquiring of statehood were so rapid as still to take our breath away. They have made a centre of civilization out of barren sand hills, while places that were already cities in 1848 are still provincial in temper, outlook, and achievement. Yet to-day San Franciscans give less impression of rush or haste than most Americans. They move with quiet certitude—physically and socially—to the goal of their desires.

There seems to be time enough. No one is slow or indolent, but no one is in a fevered rush. One comes to wonder whether this powerful, graceful, determined race has not arrived at the golden mean between laziness and bustle by being particularly sure of its context. When you can count on the climate, you do not have to rise at dawn to take advantage of a pleasant day. When you have decided what constitutes civilized life and have educated public opinion so that you can live that life, you do not have forever to be taking precautions or meeting foolish emergencies. D. V., the day is yours.

San Franciscans are restless like other people;

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they, too, dash to Europe, dash to Asia, circumnavigate the globe. Travel does not worry them. Presumably the young folk dance and drink and gamble like other young folk elsewhere. That there is a "fast" set, and all the rest of it, no one would deny. But when they come home, they come home to something a little more civilized than most of us. Climate and landscape and knowledge aiding, they have developed a nearly perfect country-house existence, as the town dwellers have developed the most charming and convenient of urban lives. The supreme degree of domestic luxury, I have always understood, consists in being served by Chinese. A good many Californians still achieve that blessing. All through the Far West, clubs serve many purposes that they cannot serve in most climates. The constant habit of using clubs—both city and country—for social purposes, makes everything easier. You can keep your own home—your house, your ranch, or your bungalow—for yourself and your closest friends. An infinite amount of wear and tear, both physical and moral, is saved.

This conception of the way to expend least energy on the mechanical side of life goes very far down through the social strata. It is California, I believe, that endowed the nation both with bungalows and cafeterias. Almost anything

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can be called a bungalow, and I have eaten in cafeterias that were both spacious and sumptuous. But a large part of the Californian population does live in bungalows—little ones, the real thing—with a garage always, but no second story. The family, however, does not have to bump up against itself and each other at every turn; nor need there be any smell of cabbage (familiar accusation!) in the house. The children can be out of doors all day—and at night on sleeping-porches. (Yes, they sleep in the very heart of the Pacific fog, and they are gorgeously sturdy and blooming.) They have not the American prejudice against eating as a family in public places; and the whole clan can be piled into the car and taken to its meals wherever the clan's taste or purse indicates. Certified milk and cereals for the children, if you want them; a raw food restaurant, if you must have it; a good French or Italian table d'hôte if you have the time. Hotel dining-rooms are full of children in high chairs. Bungalows have been forced on the world, like apartment-houses, by the servant problem. But on the Coast they like them; for citizens on the Coast are analogous to amphibians—they are as happy out of doors as in. They really must like them, or a steamship line that runs between the Northwest and the Orient would not advertise, as the last

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word in luxury for passengers, "four-room bungalow suites." You cannot imagine any one's even *wishing* to cross the Atlantic in a bungalow.

The French have a saying: *Si je vous aime, est-ce que cela vous regarde?* Any one has a right to place his affection where he will, provided he makes no demands. It is none of San Francisco's business (according to the saying) that it should happen to suit me better than New York or London or Paris—as it does. At different times in my life, I have entered San Francisco after long absence, and the spell has never failed. With no right in it whatsoever—for the tourist has no rights—I recognize it for the heart's home. That very fact makes the pen hesitate; for no truth can come out of sentimental reflections. I have deliberately refrained from dwelling overmuch on the beauty that is hers, trying rather, in perfectly unmystical fashion, to analyze only those reactions which I have in common with almost all my acquaintances who know the place. What I have said is said and felt by many people of many kinds. What I feel, myself, about the place is my own affair—and would interest no one. But I think any casual reader may take it from me that the region of San Francisco Bay is more beautiful than any of the southern littoral—whether Santa Barbara and Montecito, or San Diego with Point

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Loma and Coronado. Of course, if they bridge the Golden Gate—all signs will fail.

Bret Harte's apostrophe to San Francisco has been much quoted.

Serene, indifferent to fate,
Thou sittest by the western gate.

Only those people are indifferent to fate who are possessed of a philosophy that has come to terms with destiny. By and large, one fancies, San Francisco has done that more shrewdly than any other of our great cities. The most picturesque and parti-colored of pasts has evolved into a very complicated and distinguished present.

THE END

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